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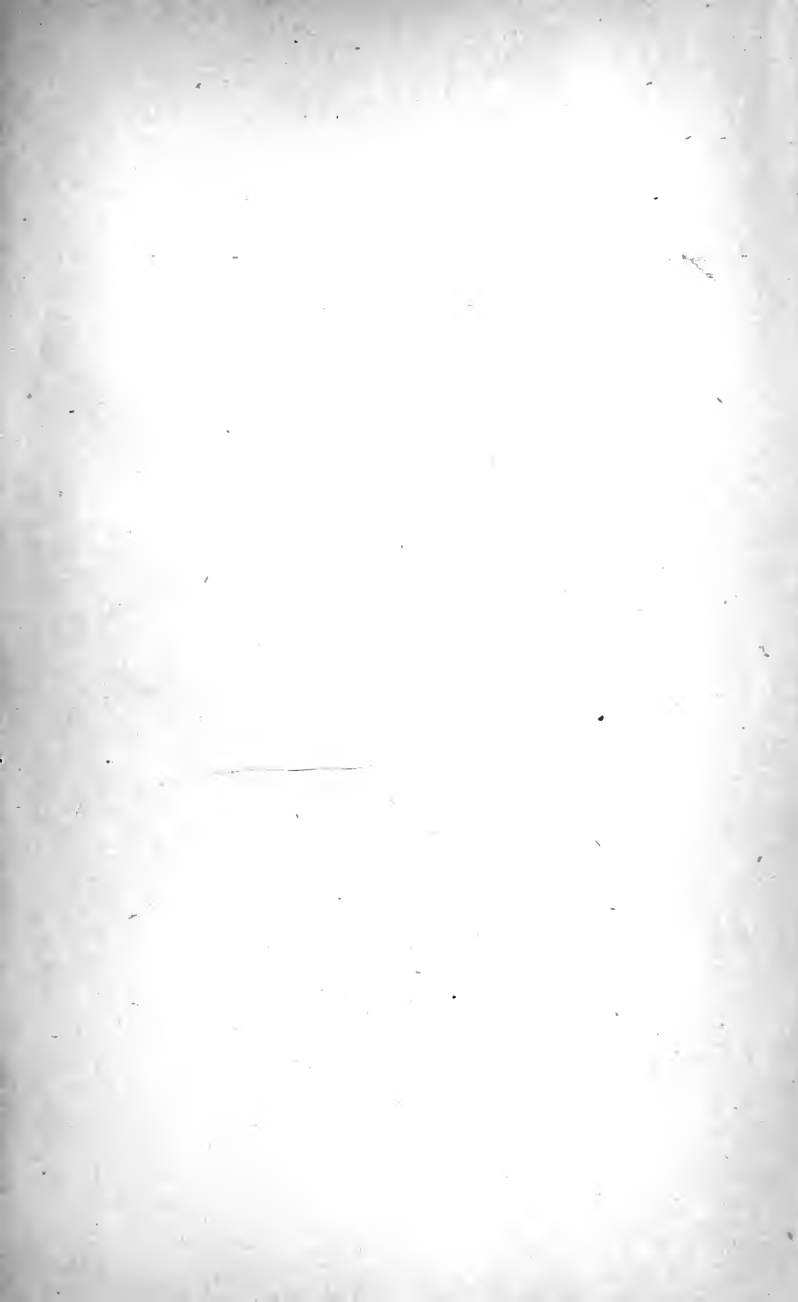
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KINDLING;

A WAY TO DO IT.

A SIMPLE METHOD.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE H. B. BROTHERS, NEW YORK.

NEW YORK.

NEW YORK.

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NEW YORK.

KINDLING;

OR,

A WAY TO DO IT.

BY

A Sabbath School Teacher.

WITH AN

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

BY

REV. R. S. STORRS, JUN., D. D.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.



THE volume before me, which I have been requested to introduce to the public with this brief note, has some special claims on my own regard, and on that of those who may purchase and read it. It has been written, not by a scholar or a retired thinker, elaborately discussing and criticising principles which he had never himself reduced to practice; not by a professional book-maker, aiming to excite, and in turn to minister to, a public appetite, for the sake of his own emolument or fame; but by a thoughtful and earnest Christian mer-

chant, who has been for many years energetically engaged in efforts to extend the kingdom of Christ in the world, especially by means of Sabbath School instruction; and who eagerly desires to awaken a fresh sense of responsibility among Christians, in regard especially to the use of the same vital, effective, and successful Christian agency. *He has written it out of his heart.* It is the record and the fruit of his own experience. And this alone should be enough to commend his volume to candid and earnest readers, in these years of professional piety and rhetorical enthusiasm; of a religionism so dainty that while sentimentalizing about Christ, and looking down upon "the world," it refuses to touch the real burdens of humanity with one of its fingers.

Of the particular opinions affirmed in the volume, or the particular methods and means

of operation developed and recommended by it, each reader of course will judge for himself. The writer of it, I am sure, would be the very last to claim for himself infallibility, or any authority over the opinions and the practices of others; and he will only desire his book to have influence in so far as it may commend itself to the judgments and the hearts of those who shall read it. I can only say, that so far as I have read it—and nearly all its chapters have been spread before me, as they have been passing through the press—I have seen nothing in it that did not seem to me in essential harmony with the spirit and the tenor of the Sermon on the Mount, and the Acts of the Apostles. I am confident, from the impression it has made upon my own mind, that others will appreciate, as I have done, the general soundness and force of its views; the anima-

tion, vigor, and impelling energy of its style—which has its occasional infirmities and obscurities, as was to be expected, but which has also a sincerity, an inward coherence, an individual character, and a freshness of appeal peculiar to itself—and the spirit of living faith and force which breathes throughout it. And I cannot but hope that many hearts will be touched with higher inspirations to duty, as well as aided in the performance of that duty, by the perusal of this book.

I will only add one other word: that there seem to me to be omens of great good, in the fact that Christian merchants are beginning to use the press to animate themselves, and others around them, to new zeal in Christ's work. I trust, for one, that the movement thus inaugurated, in the last few years, will go steadily and widely forward; that all Christian disciples

will recognize their responsibility for the right and manly use of the Press, if God enables them to use it, for the utterance of their own conviction and experience, and the impression of their thought on the minds of others; till the Christian literature of our time shall be not so much a temple, raised on the arches and surrounded by the peristyle of careful and cold scholastic treatises, as a forest, springing upward from its natural bed in the hearts and minds of a cultivated and thoughtful Christian democracy, its pillared stems pointing toward Heaven evermore, its strength replenished, year by year, by the rain and the sunshine that come to it from above, its propagation secured by the forces and laws that first erected it, and its boughs full to the end of time of happy thoughts and holy aspirations, that 'sing as birds among the branches.' Such

a literature will have a stability and value that the other never can have; and its leaves would be leaves of life and healing.

God speed it, in His time! and make this volume, inspired by a true zeal, begun in prayer, and finished with faith, the fruitful parent of many others.

R. S. STORRS, JUN.

BROOKLYN, *May*, 1856.

P R E F A C E .



ANY man who pays all his debts has a right to make a book, and even to pay people for reading it. So, also, any man has an equal right to criticise, approve, or condemn his performance. But let both remember that for their motives, and for the spirit in which they act, as well as for the time, talents, and money thus expended, they will be held accountable. The Bible is the only book which comes to us clothed with such testimonials that we have *no right* to question its divine authority, or to refuse to yield to its truths an unqualified assent. The place of reason, with regard to this volume, is, to examine, with the utmost care, the evidence of its authenticity

and the meaning of its teachings. These being ascertained, assent is compelled.

But God has exercised his right, in giving us such a revelation as he pleased. For wise purposes, he has not seen fit to reveal every truth with an equal degree of clearness. True, Inspiration has so guided the sacred penman, in the statement of every truth, and in the narration of every historical fact, that, perhaps to a perfect being all might be equally clear. But, in adapting revelation to the broken, shattered condition in which it finds sinful man, He has given to every truth its relative place and value, so as best to meet the wants of his creature. There is, therefore, on many subordinate points of truth, as well as on many matters of expediency in practice, room for honest difference of opinion; and this forms the basis of Protestant freedom, as well as of the largest charity toward each other, in respect to differences which do not touch fundamental principles.

For any one, therefore, to write a book or speak his opinions, with the expectation that

every one will agree with him, would be, on the one hand, to assume that men are incapable of thinking for themselves; or, on the other hand, to arrogate to himself infallibility.

The most that common sense can justly anticipate, when any thing more than an axiom is asserted, is, that, by the jostle of opinions and sentiments, the chaff will more and more be separated from the wheat; and that approximation to the right will be made by every winnower of popular opinions.

As we have no aspiration after literary fame, we stand in no terror of the critics. We have penned our thoughts under the severest pressure of business, from which we do not intend to "retire." If it should be said that circumstances are no apology for the imperfections of a production that claims the public attention, we reply that nothing but a sincere and earnest belief that we have something of importance to urge upon our fellow-Christians, could have induced us to appear before them in this manner. We hope, moreover, that our

only object is to do good, and to promote a cause, which is dear to us as life. We have sought to "kindle" the smoking embers into a flame; and, in so doing, have only given utterance to our deepest convictions.

To the end that this volume may be a means of extending co-operative Christianity, of establishing Sabbath Schools where they are not, and of perfecting them where they are, that souls may be converted and God be glorified, the prayer of the reader is entreated to join with that of

THE AUTHOR.

KINDLING.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

SINCE the Sabbath School has become co-extensive with Christianity, infolding within its different forms of organization every degree of labor,* and every variety of experience, no apology is deemed necessary for suggesting a few principles, of general application, for the guidance of those who have not already devised a better way.†

While any attempt to induce uniformity of labor‡ would more than jeopardize efficiency, the "*How to do it*," in some way, should

* See "*The Child and the Man*," published by Whipple & Co., Boston.

† See *Todd's "S. S. Teacher*," and the "*Teacher Taught*."

‡ See *Post on Congregationalism*.

no longer remain a desideratum with any one born in a Christian land.*

There are momentous questions yet to be discussed by the Protestant press, pulpit, and tongue; and time, it is hoped, will not much longer wait for them.†

How to dislodge the professed follower of Christ from the strongholds of selfishness, sectarianism, and sin,‡ is a question that will appear more significant as increasing light shows the darkness, and society at large becomes more and more conformed to the outlines of Christianity. We cannot, then, too soon inquire how the restraining, sanctifying truths of the Gospel may be brought into contact with every human heart;§ how the Christian may be led to make the entire surrender, and disabuse his mind of common perversions of the doctrines of grace,—even such as the Sovereignty of God, Justification by Faith, the Saint's Perseverance, and the final triumphs of righteousness,—so as not prac-

* Rev. xxii. 17: "Let him that heareth say, Come." *Potts' Sermon on "Unemployed Talent in the Church."*

† See "*New Themes for the Protestant Clergy.*"

‡ Harris' "*Mammon,*" and "*Great Commission.*" "*Decapolis.*"

§ Mark, xvi. 15: "Go ye into all the world," &c.

tically to derive from them some apology for his guilty indolence, his treacherous alliance with the world.*

Every prayer that rises from a Christian heart, every exhortation, every sermon, has for its object, the coming of Christ's kingdom.† But, after all, may it not be asked, Where has the work been undertaken with the expectation, even, of a complete accomplishment? What scheme has been devised by which the conscientious can know that they are working on a plan capable of universal application, and the intelligent feel assured that, when this is carried out, Christ's injunction will be obeyed, and the Gospel preached to every creature?

There is, in almost every mind, a vague apprehension that, "somehow or other," this is to be done by the "*preaching of the Gospel*." A smaller proportion of Christians, willing to be a little more definite, would specify the instrumentalities by which it is to be done.

* For a succinct and clear statement of these doctrines see "*Hill's Divinity*," Chaps. ix., x., xi., "Arminian and Calvinistic Systems Compared;" also Book v., chaps. i. to v. See also articles on these several doctrines in the "*Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*," or any theological dictionary. Also *Edwards on the Will*.

† Mat. vi. 10: "Thy kingdom come," &c. 1 Cor. x. 31: "Do all to the glory of God."

While we may admire and applaud the zeal with which any actual laborer - in any one department may advocate his as *the* instrumentality, can it be denied that, as yet, there is no system devised to reach the entire community? Is it not time, again we ask, that in some community (in all Christendom if you please), the experiment of perfecting a theory, and putting it in practical operation, should be somewhere defined, and everywhere undertaken? Especially, should not this be done if it can be demonstrated that, even in case of ultimate failure, every step towards it is positive success? It must be admitted, at the threshold of such an investigation, that the largest charity* only, can look complacently on such an attempt; and it is difficult to anticipate which will bring down upon this daring endeavor the heaviest rebuke, its arrogant pretensions, or its invidious comparisons.

Dismissing, however, our fears, if we can but assure ourselves that we have no motive but the development of truth, and most unfeigned love for every channel that shall convey its healing waters to the sin-stricken heart, we

* 1 Cor. xiii. 7: "Hopeth all things."

will here, as everywhere else, assert the *Divine right of free inquiry*.*

The limits we have proposed to ourselves, preclude every thing here but bare assertion and assumption. On so sacred a theme, the suppression of our fears that, while attempting to do good, we may do injury by being misunderstood, would be criminal arrogance. But if the hope of compensation for such injury is not delusive, we would, in advance, beg forgiveness from all on earth, and pray earnestly for guidance from above.

Those who have time and inclination to pursue the inquiry further may find some aid from the marginal references to such helps as have come within our limited reading, especially those which refer to inspired authority.

I. Our first position is, That the first or primeval condition of man was holy ;† that he continued so to the fall ; that God's theory of recovery is remedial and educational for individuals, churches, and nations ; that pre-

* Acts, xvii. 11 ; 1 John, iv. 1 : "Search the Scriptures." "Try the Spirits."

† Gen. i. 31: All things created good. Eccl. vii. 29: "God hath made man upright."

vious to the call of Abraham there was no priesthood;* that a priesthood was then introduced and matured to evolve the idea of a sacrifice;† that the Jewish nation was set apart to evolve the idea of a consecrated people;‡ that when the former was consummated in Christ, and the latter was made to give place to a spiritual religion, a new basis or order of procedure was introduced, and the entire priesthood and the Jewish national peculiarities were abolished, so far as any exclusive prerogative was involved.

II. The second position we assume is, that while the Bible, especially the New Testament, has enjoined upon every believer the duty of preaching or announcing its truths to others, it has given no *special authority* to any one form over another.§

* No priesthood before the flood, see the history. Melchizedek was a priest, but not of a *priesthood*, or succession of priests. See Gen. xiv. 18; Heb. v. 6.

† See Heb. ix. 1-11, wherein the typical nature and design of the Levitical service is clearly set forth.

‡ Rom. ii. 28, 29: Circumcision of the heart. Rom. xii. 1, 2: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice," &c. 1 Pet. ii. 5: "Ye are a holy priesthood." See "*Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation*."

§ Neither under the old dispensation nor the new, was teaching, according to Scripture examples, confined to any particular class of persons. When Joshua proposed to Moses to forbid the

III. Our third position is, that God has indicated a mode by which Christians may become organized into voluntary societies; but that these organizations are not an *end*, but a *means* to an end,—to wit, the more complete dissemination of the Gospel; that whenever and wherever they accomplish this result, they carry with them all the rights and prerogatives of a Christian church, or assembly of believers, whenever they become such by entering into covenant with God and with each other in this relation;* that all are under equal obligation

prophesying of Eldad and Medad, in the camp, and not with the rest before the Lord, he replied, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets!"—Numbers, xi. 29. And when the disciples forbade one to cast out devils, because he did not follow them, Christ replied, "Forbid him not, for he that is not against us is with us."—Mark, ix. 38, 39; Luke, ix. 49, 50. From time to time, under the Old Testament, the Lord raised up prophets from among the people, to teach them his will. In the primitive Church, every Christian joined in the general work of making known the glad tidings of salvation. After the persecution that arose about Stephen, all were scattered abroad, *except the apostles*, and *they that were scattered abroad*, went everywhere, *preaching the word*.—Acts, viii. 1, 4, 5; xi. 19. Aquila and his wife Priscilla, and many others were "helpers" of Paul, and they acted the part of theological professors to Apollos. Acts, xviii. 2, 3, 18, 26; Rom., xvi. 3, 9. See, also, "*Democracy of Christianity*," "*Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation*," showing the design of the symbolical system, and the abolishing of the priesthood.

* In Matt., xviii. 15–20, Christ has given us a model of organization, and specified the number necessary, "two or three." Com-

to subordinate the interests of time to those of eternity ; and that, to this end, the calling and consecration of all believers is equally sacred ;* that all private and public consecration implies this ; that some are fully authorized to give, and some to receive entire or partial support from others ;† that these relations modify no obligation, and imply no exclusiveness, except such as are mutually conceded, for the purpose of the extension of Christ's kingdom in the hearts of men, and the preservation of good order ;‡ that these functions are clearly indi-

pare with the history of the planting of primitive churches in the book of Acts.

* See general description of believers in all the Epistles, and especially the general Epistle of Peter. "Kings and priests,"—if figurative, it means *no degrees*, or one above another in office or calling. Matt. x. 9, 10 ; 1 Cor. vii. 23 : "Ye are bought with a price." Matt. vi. 19, 34 : "Lay not up treasures on earth. Take no thought for the morrow." Luke, xii. 33 : "Sell that ye have, and give alms." Ib. xiv. 33 : "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple." Acts, ii. 44, 45 : "All things common." 1 Pet. iv. 10 : "As good stewards," &c. What can all these passages mean, if not an entire consecration of person and property to the Lord ?

† 1 Cor. ix. 1-18 : "They that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." Matt. x. 9, 10 : "The workman is worthy of his meat." Gal. vi. 6 : "Let him that is taught communicate to him that teacheth, in all good things."

‡ Mark, ix. 38, 39 : "Casting out devils, forbid him not." 1 Cor. xiv. 40 : "Let all things be done decently and in order."

cated, enumerated, and limited, in the New Testament, but that the particular mode of their operation is without description or limitation;* that every organization and every individual that can prove themselves, by precept, precedent, or fair implication, to be conformed in spirit and mode to the divine pattern, are entitled to the countenance and support of Christians; but that we should feel an obligation to co-operate with that which intelligent conviction points out as the one that shall promote in the best way the thorough Christianization of individuals and of nations;† that the modes of teaching or discussing and illustrating heaven's revelations to fallen man have varied, and will continue to vary, under the ever-changing circumstances

* Eph. iv. 10, 11: "And he gave some apostles," &c. 1 Cor. xii. 4-30: "Diversities of gifts, but one spirit;" the body one, many members, &c. Rom. xii. 3-8: Every one to use his own gifts according to the grace given him. So, also, 1 Peter, iv. 10, 11.

† Heb. viii. 5: Make all things according to the pattern; for which see Matt. xviii. 15-20. We have no right to create all sorts of things, as the Catholics have. Matt. xxi. 13, "Den of thieves." The Divine pattern is simple in its spirit as well as its acts. The Catholic Church has become the patroness of vice and wickedness, and the mass of her communicants are worse and not better for belonging to her; if better, they are so in spite of those things which they learn from her.

of our race ;* that while no one may substitute another instrumentality for one specified by revelation, it is clearly right to vary the method of application—as an illustration, the printing press, as a mode, may be substituted for writing ; standing for sitting, as the attitude for teaching ; temperance may be taught by the formation of societies ; yet neither any such nor all such can be substituted for a *living Ministry*, which announces the glad tidings of a crucified and risen Saviour as the central truth and hope of salvation for every one that believes. “ *Go ye,*” is a form not to be dispensed with, and “ *to every creature,*” a specification not to be superseded.

Rights are predicable only of individuals and communities. The former may not assume any, except such as are inherent or divine, without the consent of the latter ; hence the order of power is from the many to the few, and not from the few to the many, except in case of anarchy or of unorganized commu-

* See the revivals of religion under the Kings ; the creation of the synagogue worship, after the Babylonish captivity ; preaching since the Reformation. What was the teaching of the apostles ? Not set sermons, but direct addresses to the individuals or assemblies with whom they came in contact.

nities.* Ordination, though not the general rule but the exception, may be expedient, and often is, to designate by some rite or sign, both the individual and the method of accomplishing the desired end.†

It is observable that there is no general command for ordination; for this would not only make obligatory a universal practice, like that now claimed, but would imply restriction, limitation, &c. The injunction to Timothy and Titus is special, and is correctly understood to be of the nature of a precedent. There is an obvious and important difference between command and precedent. The former binds, and is obligatory, like those which

* Matt. xxiii. 8: "All ye are brethren." Luke, xxii. 26: "He that is greatest, let him be as the younger," &c. Acts, i. 15-26: All participated in the election of Matthias; so, also, the seven deacons; Acts, vi. The church at Antioch referred the question of circumcision to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem; and the "brethren" participated in the discussion and action. Acts, xv. 1, 2. The messages of Christ to the seven churches in Asia, were addressed through their ministers to the churches themselves, the whole church being held responsible for harbored evils. Rev. ii. 1-22.

† See Paul's acts in ordaining elders, for purposes of organization only; and his injunction to Titus takes in unorganized communities. Acts, xiv. 22, 23; Titus, i. 5. See, also, how the last command of Christ was carried out by those who were scattered abroad at the first persecution, who preached publicly without ordination. See, also, the principle discussed at length in *Democracy of Christianity*.

require preaching, baptism, and the Lord's Supper. The latter permits, justifies for a cause; and a thing having been sometimes done by the apostles is proof that it may be expedient, and adopted where circumstances demand it. Where there is danger of disorder or confusion, or in unorganized communities, it should be practiced. It is also manifestly proper when any community wish to set apart one of their number to a specific function. But to claim for it such a divine legality as to forbid others to preach, is a perversion of such precedent, only exceeded by the far more disastrous consequences of transferring and evading obligations alike common to all, on the ground that they are specific to some. The entire brotherhood can never be aroused to action corresponding to the covenant, and consecration made or implied when Christianity is professed, until dislodged from this sacerdotal covert, and eclaireised of this fatal mist.

In the enumeration and statement of these premises, it is our intention to indicate a course of reading and inquiry into the relation of the Sabbath school to the Bible, as an organization.

We would not detract an iota from the

reputation of Robert Raikes; yet to claim for him or any man, the discovery of an instrumentality which heaven has revealed in its essential features, is to substitute the glory of man for the glory of God.* While many assume the Sabbath School to be a human invention, and an earth-born instrumentality, only as old as the assembling of a few children on the Sabbath, in the suburbs of Gloucester, under the instruction of a hired teacher, by Robert Raikes, we cannot entertain the belief that the same persons would admit for a moment that the results of the Sabbath School are to be attributed to human invention. At the same time, it should be freely admitted that many men have been, that many may, and it is hoped will be employed by the Divine Agent, the Holy Spirit, to present new forms of expression, and new modes of dissemination.†

* See the *Child and the Man*, pp. 57, 59.

† See *New-England Memorial*, p. 407: the saying of Rev. John Robinson, pastor of the exiled church at Leyden, who charged them before God to follow him no further than he followed Christ; and if God should reveal any thing to them, by any other instrument, to be ready to receive it; for he was very confident the Lord had more truth and light yet to break forth out of his holy word. See, also, the many eminent men who have, from time to time risen in the church, to startle and arouse her from her slumbers, by new modes of presenting truth, and new forms of persuasion.

From the broad premises we have assumed, it will have been already anticipated that we intend to claim for the institution of the Sabbath School a *Scriptural authority*, as coming fairly within the divine charter, and entirely conformed to it, as well as being fully equipped for the purpose of bringing the Gospel into universal contact with the ravages of sin. Already have its benign influences been extensively felt; and may we not justly inquire whether the increase of moral force that has marked the brief period of its imperfect establishment, is not evidence that there is, in this system, as in no other, an adaptation to make up what is wanting to our established church relations, such as no other organization can possibly claim? That much is needed, is not only demonstrated in the numerous outside organizations now existing; but it is manifest from the fact that the conquests of truth over error have not been retained, though achieved at so dear a rate. Where are the churches of Asia Minor? Where, the fruits of the reformation in Germany, Switzerland, France and other countries of Europe? Where, we may ask, the results of successes in American revivals, and the numerous conquests that truth has made over

error, in all ages of the world? Slowly and gradually have accessions to the kingdom of the Prince of Peace been made; but, for want of complete organization and spiritual force, almost as steadily and easily have reprisals been made by the prince of darkness.

The Christian era has had some faithful preachers of the Gospel all along the career of centuries;* and, although they have been increased since the Reformation,† it was not until the Sabbath School movement commenced, that the obligation imposed by the Gospel on all its disciples, began to be felt in such a way as to lead to extensive organizations for its universal dissemination.‡ The numerous

* See the Fathers, and more recently such men as Fenelon, Thomas à Kempis, and others like them.

† See Baxter, Whitefield, Wesley, and eminent preachers of this century.

‡ Since the time that Robert Raikes established his first Sunday School, in 1782, Foreign Missions, Home Missions, Temperance, Tract, Bible, and other Societies, in England and America, have arisen. Since the famous report of R. M. Johnson, maintaining the necessity of Sabbath mails, the mails have been stopped on that day for thousands of miles, showing that the Sabbath is better observed. There has been, also, a great gain in liberal sentiments. Twenty years ago, public meetings and individuals were mobbed for speaking against slavery; now the subject is peaceably discussed, throughout the North, and even in the national legislature. Observe, also, the general change of public sentiment, in favor of religion.

organizations which this lay influence (if we must use for perspicuity a perverted term) have called into existence, are most hopeful. Yet there may be some danger that we shall trust so much to organized action as to weaken the sense of individual obligation. Already numbers buy off *themselves* from the service of Christ with *money*, thus robbing Christianity of her moral forces in individual character,* and humanity of that feeling and sympathy which adorn and exercise her attributes, and which can be fully developed only by personal ministrations. So intense was this personal sympathy in the Apostolic age, that not only did they who experienced its power contribute freely and labor incessantly, but inspiration alone could restrain her penmen, that they should not assert the immediate† coming again of the Saviour. Had the Apostles been told that after the lapse of 1800 years only a narrow belt of Christian light should half encircle the globe, could they have believed it?

* The primitive disciples had all things common. All must follow Christ *personally*, if need be, Luke xviii. 22: "Sell all that thou hast, and follow me." Luke xiv. 16—24: Supper and excuses.

† 2 Thess. ii. 2. See conversion of Zaccheus, and the unconquerable zeal of the early Christians generally.

We may pause here to inquire what agency is best fitted, not only to retain what is gained, at every point, but to consummate the work. Can an *exclusive* Ministry do it, educated at so great a cost of time, labor, and money, as those now ordained *as the only Ministry*?* From every century back to the first of our era, there comes up a responsive NO! Even in Great Britain and the United States, monopolizing as they do almost the treasures of Christendom, there is hardly wealth enough to support such a Ministry as would be required, were only salaried agents to perform the offices of Christian obligation to the entire population in either country. Hardly would there be enough to build their places of public and social worship. But if there were means enough, and educated men enough, and houses of worship enough, the work would not and could not be done on such a theory. The very nature of religion would have to be changed, for every revealed law would be contravened by it. Paid agency of any kind

* 1800 years have elapsed, and Christendom has given but one missionary to 380,000 for the heathen world. To supply the heathen with one minister to every 1000 persons, would require 646,000 men, which, at \$400 a year, would cost \$258,400,000.

would most assuredly sustain a different relation to the bulk of mankind, and every grace that should be the growth of exercise, would wither under such a system. The sympathy on which action is based, throughout the New Testament, would dry up and become a dust only, amidst the creaking wheels of a machinery too ponderous to avoid a crash before its complete erection. The entire man and the entire Christian are an indissoluble union. Our piety has become diluted with worldliness, only exhibiting a jejune and sickly aspect; and one reason is, the modern contrivances to shift responsibility upon specially designated and salaried agents.

Let us, at this point, guard against being misunderstood. We would not have one less but many more of them than there now are; but what we say is, these cannot complete the work. They are as yet needed for the creation of light enough to see the darkness. Without the theological professor, and the educated minister, the college, the seminary, and the pulpit, we should at once sink to barbarism. But these are the encampments and the fortresses, the arsenals, and recruiting stations, necessary even to keep possession of the pres-

ent position. For vigorous, aggressive action over the earth, the ENTIRE HOST is to be equipped and set in motion, on a sympathetic theory of caring for one another, not in the capacity of an agent, but in that of a Christian man—nay, *a man*. The merchandise, the farm, the oxen, nay, all human relations are to be held subordinate to this theory.* Any other system would, in the end, defeat itself; for only he that watereth shall be watered himself.

Although the greater includes the less, it may be, nevertheless, needful to an intelligent view of the true position of the Sabbath-school system, to contrast with it some other organizations. Can the Bible Society, then, become this agent, to carry the Gospel to every creature? Give it but a competent living ministry, a sufficient number of carriers and teachers, and it may. We would, at this very point, abandon our premises if the Sabbath-school were not such an agency as the Bible Society would then become. Can the Tract Society do this, with its few paid agents, and its voluntary corps of visitors, who, once a month, visit those who improve no other opportunity of

* Luke, xiv. 16—24, 26.

associating themselves with the circle of religious influences? Let the experience of the Christian, who requires his sermons and prayer-meetings, and daily Christian intercourse, and then lives a famishing religious life, answer.

Freely would we admit that the Sabbath-school, as an organization, could not do it with merely the weekly contact with those who enjoy no other privileges. But here the teacher is supposed to know all that it is proper to know of every individual in his *parish*.* He is not only to meet them twice on the Sabbath, but to know and care for all the influences that attend them in the daily march and struggle of life. But, as is appropriate, on each Sabbath he is supposed to infold his entire charge in his sympathizing and affectionate heart. Seated by their side, with an open Bible, he is to declare authoritatively the glad tidings, and minister a balm to every wound. Here the recondite principles of a spiritual life, are developed in just the way that will alike benefit the giver and receiver. Here is a contact, uniting each to each in a

* His "*parish*" may be from one to twenty families, just in the proportion that the "living" Christians bear to the rest of the community. See chap. iii., *Field*.

holy fraternity, which the Holy Spirit delights to sustain, cement, and make eternal. Over this communion of man with his fellow, we hear the wings of angels, that are poising, with tremulous anxiety, to bear to heaven the news of a repenting sinner. Earth may now deride, and hide from our view half the circle of our rainbow of hope ; but as we are borne upward by the impulses of love, the circle will be sure to include the entire horizon of a full-orbed millennial day. May the Holy Spirit shorten the day of preparation, already so long, and the Sabbath-school, as a system, be made complete in the perfection of its glorious yet defective materials !

CHAPTER II.

FIELD.

THE heart that has felt the love of God, and become experimentally* acquainted with the plan which Heaven has devised and revealed for saving the soul, is immediately surrounded by a field, and probable *the* field, of its Christian labor.† As soon as the man is converted, he makes the inquiry, "What shall I do?"‡ Action here, as well as everywhere throughout God's universe, is the evidence of life. This is held throughout, the New Testament to be at once the test of genuineness and the rule of obedience.§ No accumulation|| of care or responsibilities, on the Bible theory, is to subordinate, or even to defer for a moment, the

* See Christ's conversation with Nicodemus. John, iii. 1-13.

† Luke, x. 29-37: The "Good Samaritan;" John, ch. iv.: Christ and the woman of Samaria.

‡ See Paul. Acts, ix. 6.

§ John, xxi. 15: "Lovest thou me?" "Feed my lambs."

|| Mat. viii. 21, 22: "Let the dead bury their dead."

commencement of this labor;* nor is the process to cease so long as life may last, or a sinner be reached by a perseverance limited only to the laying down of life.† Under an intensity of emotion measured only by Christ's love to us, the first sinner within our reach is to be approached. This is the‡ primary work of every convert; and no organization of any kind is to be considered, until, to some extent at least, this labor has been effective. As soon, however, as there is sufficient evidence that you can accomplish more by collecting two or more, and addressing them together, you are bound to do it, always taking "*what you can*" as the measure of your obligation.§ Whether there be one or one thousand Christians ready to join with you, this individual application is the first thing to be accomplished, and never to be superseded by any organized action that does not involve and facilitate it. From the

* Mat. x. 37: "He that loveth father or mother more than me," &c.

† Luke, xiv. 26: "If any man hate not his own life, he cannot be my disciple."

‡ Mat. vi. 33: "Seek first the kingdom of heaven," &c.; Luke xii. 6: Sparrows.

§ Mark xiv. 8: "She hath done what she could."

beginning* to the end of the divine economy, personal intercourse among both saints and sinners, moved by the impulses of heaven-born sympathy, is presupposed, and is ever to be progressively maintained.

Nor is there a place on the face of the globe where this labor is so thoroughly accomplished as fairly to demand organizations for carrying Christianity beyond the bounds of civilization. Heaven forbid that we should arrest one ray of influence already reaching the ends of the earth; but that which it is safe to assert is, that such ought to be the spiritual forces radiating from every Christian heart, and every community, that, from every point of a circle of concentric interconnection should be diffused the transforming power of truth, bringing hourly accessions to the area of Christendom, and thus making godliness commensurate with humanity.

“As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake,
The center moved, a circle straight succeeds,
Another still, and still another spreads—
Friend, kindred, neighbor, first it will embrace,
Your country next, and next all human race.”

* John, iii. 16: “God so loved the world,” &c.; 1 John iv. 11: “We ought also to love one another.”

But we will not forget that we are prescribing for organic rather than individual action. This divergence prepares the way for the development of the first or primary step in the Sabbath school process. This will be the calling of two or more individuals, of any condition or age, at a given hour of the Sabbath, to meet with you for the study of the Bible. This meeting may be in your own house, or in any other place deemed most convenient. Wherever there is a *Christian*, this work should commence. Even if no Bible is to be had, the teaching should commence from memory, whether in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America. Are there two of you? Then you may act in concert, and commence a teachers' meeting (see chap. iv.), or even organize a church, for you are within the Divine charter (see Matt. xviii. 20). So should the work progress throughout Christendom, and every additional force increase, in a compound ratio, the accumulating powers throughout all time.

Never without self-prostration and adoring gratitude should we contemplate the past progress of Christianity; but so slight and superficial have been its conquests, that not yet is to be found a place where this work need not

commence anew. Wherever there is the great Sabbath-school Teacher (the Minister), it only facilitates the work, not superseding it; for nowhere is yet to be found a community where one in four even, professes to be born again. And while, from this stand-point, we may see the difference between a New England Christian community and that of a heathen or savage tribe,* how easy to anticipate the millennium and all its promised blessings, when the moral forces shall be quadrupled† in the most select Christian community! Truth alone is more powerful than Sin. The one has desolated, the other shall redeem the world.

It would be presumptive proof that we had assumed too much for the Sabbath School, if we should find that, as a system, it is not adapted to every condition of society; for then it would not be the vehicle of truth to every nation and individual. Such a want of adaptation would be *prima-facie* evidence of its being a human expedient rather than a divinely constituted agency. But here, as

* Rom. i. 28-32: Description of heathenism, "filled with all unrighteousness," &c.

† Heb. viii. 11: "All shall know the Lord," &c.

everywhere, the Sabbath School proves its high commission.* On the frontier settlement, in every town and village, as well as in the dense population of the city, is every one bound to sustain the relation of *teacher* or *taught*, in the universal school-room. Not a place so vile, not a cavern so dark, that a beam of heavenly light shall not penetrate it. Not a gem that flashes its light there, but Christ has purchased,† and it is for a human hand to polish it for a place in his diadem.‡ Do you know but just enough of the way of salvation to assure you that there is hope?—that same knowledge you are bound to communicate, under penalty, to him who may not know so much.§ If you have not even a Bible, you may be under the strongest obligation to draw near you, by cords of love, the nearest soul, to whom you may tell what you have seen or heard|| of God's method of

* Matt. xxviii. 19: "Go, teach all nations," &c.

† 1 John, ii. 2: "He is the propitiation—for the sins of the whole world."

‡ 1 Th. ii. 19: "For what is our crown of rejoicing," &c.

§ Acts, xviii. 25: Apollos preached, knowing only the baptism of John.

|| Mark, v. 20: He that was possessed of devils began to publish "how great things Jesus had done for him."

saving sinners. Have you a Bible and the power to read it? Then you have all the furniture needed for an organization; and it becomes one when, whether in the sun or shade, you anywhere begin to speak in the name of Christ. But have you neither seen nor heard of the way of salvation?—still, the susceptibilities within you, and the works of God as they lie around you, prompt you directly to love and adore Him. The heathen were without excuse; first, because they felt a conscience approving or condemning, and second, because they saw evidence of a God of wisdom, power, goodness, and justice, without and within.* But few if any will ever read these pages, who live beyond the precincts of a community at least nominally Christian, or where there are not enough who profess supreme consecration to the work of saving souls, to form an organization on some model herein set forth. Our appeal is throughout to such only as have the means of knowing and doing their duty; and we have now to indicate a way in which it may be done, and to enforce the obligation of doing it.

* Rom. i. 20: "Without excuse;" ii. 14, 15, "conscience accusing or else excusing."

The first movement towards organization should be in the form of a *teachers' meeting*, (see chap. iv.) Two or more having met and prayed, they are to look out upon the ground to be possessed, and assign to each of themselves, in a given locality, the geographical area to be morally cultivated. If it is but one house or one family that can be faithfully ministered to, by one who proposes to be associated in the school, let him or her undertake to penetrate that with a ray of heavenly light. Your commission to enter is from Christ;* and in his spirit you may inquire into the ground of their immortal hopes; and if the parents and children attend upon no means of grace, you may invite them to the school-room, if indeed you have yet secured one. With each class in the school a district should be connected, clearly defined, and numbered to correspond, and the history of the district should be so identified with that of the class as to compose not an adjunct but a component part of the school. This district should be regularly visited by the teacher, and the moral condi-

* Luke, x. 15: "Into whatsoever house ye enter," &c.

tion of each family reported at the teachers' meeting, with such facts as may interest or profit others. If you have a promise from old or young that they will attend the school, go and take them by the hand and lead them in, and introduce them to the superintendent, when your duty with them for the present may cease. He is to see them classed. Although these may constitute a part of your field, you may henceforth consider that the teacher to whom the superintendent has committed them is to be the *minister* to that family. And when every family in your district shall be thus assigned to some teacher, your duty will be limited to a general inquiry after any changes which may result in bringing new settlers into your field. Or you may be called to inquire why some whom you have brought in, have been left by their teacher again to wander from the fold. This district, let it be borne in mind, is to be intersected with the visits of every teacher who may have a scholar in it. You are ordinarily only to take them to the school. There they are to be classed according to their capacity. Your own class may be composed of scholars from other districts,

and thus your ministry in your own district may be limited to those who are too old or too young, or unable from any cause, to attend upon any public ministry; nor is it proper that you should take it for granted that those families who may have some members connected with some other school or congregation, are to receive none of your attention. They may most properly; while, again, you are never to persuade an individual to leave his present connection to join yours. This would be a proselyting process unworthy a Christian teacher. But often it may be your duty to go with such a one to the place or school he may say he attends, and there suggest, in a suitable way, that your field cannot be properly cultivated unless there shall be co-operation from other schools. It may be sometimes your duty to take a scholar to the Catholic school, if he express a very decided preference to go there. While you keep in mind that a system of visiting by and for a district, is entirely distinct from your visiting your own scholars, either as absentees from your class or for purposes of intercourse with the scholar or the family from which he comes, you may not regard the one as superseding the other,

or in any way interfering with it. No one can be substituted, to visit as profitably your absent scholars; and no one can be supposed to know enough of your district to be your substitute there. This system is as proper for one school as for another; nor is any amount of wealth or respectability in a neighborhood to interfere with the system here indicated. Let it not be found at the day of Judgment that wealth or intelligence was a barrier to the aggressiveness of your Christianity, only making certain the condemnation of those whom your sympathies should reach, sanctify, and save; for then assuredly their "blood will be required at your hands."*

A book, separate from your class-book, should contain answers to every question that might be a guide to your successor, were you to leave, or to be absent on account of sickness: Questions like these: The boundaries of your district? Name and number of each family? Church or Sabbath school, or both, which each one attends? Occupation, moral character, age, &c., of each individual in a family, so far as practicable and proper? System of visiting

* Ezekiel, xxxiii. 8.

heretofore pursued, and course of conversation indicating moral and religious culture? Other influences that have a good or bad effect upon any in the district, or in a given house or family? Co-operation or opposition to be anticipated from any? Benefaction heretofore bestowed, and the effect? Tracts, books, &c., that have been left for their reading? Whether you have been regarded as the only visitor? Whether the pastor (if any) takes an interest in any particular family? Whether you have assumed the work of tract distributing in the district, and to what extent; and what other agent, if any, is at work as such, in behalf of any organization? Prayer-meeting held, and where, if any in the district, and how often, and by whom attended? History of meetings, and fruits of your labors, or the labors of any other agents?

Self-culture, or growth in grace, can be correctly and systematically pursued only by ascertaining and sustaining your true relation to society around you. The economy and wisdom of God is here manifest, as everywhere else, through his complex but perfect government. Is there a victim of vice fallen so low that the pursuit of further indulgence is physi-

cally impossible? Let not the loathsome sight divert your involuntary eye. Look at him, until the glories of the race to which he belongs, his destiny parallel with yours, and touching it at every point, except for the intervention of grace, are clearly apprehended, and you shall feel for him and love him. An infinite inventory of wealth is there embodied. Is there a rift in his horizon of guilt and gloom? Improve it! Away from the mad excitement of temptation, and the conversation may run thus: "Are your hopes immortal?" "They are." "Would you accept of annihilation were it offered you?" "Not for the gift of all material worlds." "Why do the tempests of your passions rage?" "I have cursed them, and polluted every wind of heaven with my breath, and in vengeance have they turned upon me." "Is your soul on fire with hate?" "Yes; and every element of my being is consumed in the present flames of a just retribution, and the fearful anticipation of a future hell." "And do you yet hope?" "Yes, for immortality. Yea, and purity."

This will be his answer, to himself or to you. The veriest wretch, that curses God at every breath, while He is bearing with him in His

calm serenity, has some such estimate of his own value as an immortal being, as answers to the Divine image; and he will not abandon it for any consideration. Can you not, will you not lay hold of such an one, and thus meet your obligations to Him who hath made you to differ? The penalties upon your refusal are these: You reject the very education heaven has ordained for your completeness. You blind your eyes to the depravity of your own heart, or will not look at yourself in this mirror. The sympathies which induced God (if we may so speak) to make you, and not an angel, his minister, you suppress or dwarf, by neglecting your duties to others. Infinite Wisdom has established this school for your own culture; and you practice self-deception, and charge God with imperfection, in your vain endeavors to grow in some other way. The law of growth is as firmly established as any other. A vegetable world artificially cultivated, would but faintly illustrate the sickly piety that does not, will not, grapple with self-denial. God may in mercy discipline you with trials, and make the *suffering* of his will, instead of the *doing* of it, the fire with which he reluctantly purifies you. But this is not his chosen

way. He uncovers before you the dreadful consequences of the fall; and shows you man in his moral lunacy. God, indeed, re-opens a garden of paradise; but like the mental maniac, his creature rushes into the thorns and briars of worldliness. He shows him the palaces of heaven, with golden streets and sapphire walls; but the man dwells and cuts himself among the tombs. Through you, as his best earthly friend, God courts him with caresses; and through Jesus invites him to his heavenly embrace. He jeers you both with the bitterest ribaldry. Such is man *before you*. As fellow-Christians, we may weep together at such a scene; but we must not withhold the remedy. Our Captain bids us "go." At a peril infinitely great, we defer the effort for a single hour.

CHAPTER III.

CHRISTIANITY AGGRESSIVE.

WHETHER we survey the works of art, or those which come to us bearing the impress of the divine signet, some peculiar prominent feature first arrests our attention. That which stands out, in bold relief, from all others, as we glance at the glorious fabric of Christianity, is, its *aggressiveness*. This is manifest from the very form of Christ's last command to his disciples, to go into all the world, and *preach* the *Gospel to every creature*. This they understood and executed literally.*

Observe, *first*, what it was *not*: It was not to go back to Jerusalem and build school-houses, in which to instruct the honest inquirer; for till his susceptibilities are awakened, man will not seek instruction.† It was

* See *Chalmers' Works*, vol. vi. Discourse 12, p. 265.

† See "Man Primeval," by Harris.

not to go into the temple, the synagogue, or the established school. Although the disciples might not neglect to make known their message there, as everywhere, yet, here again it is assumed that such is the alienation of man's affections,* such the strength of indwelling sin, that if the Gospel were only thus announced, men would pass heedlessly on, or eject the preacher from the proud assembly that would not listen to its humbling truths.† Nor were they to go to Athens, where philosophers‡ spent their time in the investigation of new theories; nor yet to Rome, where learning, genius, and power might take the heaven-born principles, and carry them by force of arms throughout the world.§ Such a conquest would not be victory over one sinful passion, or fit one soul for the purity and happiness of heaven. Go to every creature, was the command,|| and address to him individually the claims and the hopes of the

* Rom. iii. 10—18: "There is none righteous;" "all gone out of the way," &c.

† Mat. xxvii. 18: "For envy they delivered him." Acts, xiv. 19: Paul stoned.

‡ Acts, xvii. 21: Spend their time to tell or hear some new thing.

§ See Mohammed.

|| Mark, xvi. 15: "Go ye," &c.

Gospel. In conformity with the letter as well as with the spirit of this command, the work was undertaken. From house to house, and from street to street, the glad tidings were first heralded.* So long as this authorized attitude was maintained, this aggressive action persevered in, the progress was rapid and onward, over national boundaries, languages, and continents, towards a final consummation. The glorious light that was kindled in Bethlehem, taking the natural course that civilization and the star of empire gave it, continued its western way, until it has culminated in our cis-Atlantic solstice, soon (may we not hope?) to roll eastward again an accumulated tide of glory.

The slightest investigation will show the reason why its radiation has been so slow, and why it has belted so narrow a space on the moral geography of the globe, and why the long, dark night of relapses and revulsions has so quickly again succeeded and obscured its occasional coruscations.† It is because the large assembly had given opportunity for Dio-

* Acts, v. 42: "Daily in the temple, and in *every house*, they ceased not to preach Jesus Christ."

† See the *Seven Churches in Asia*, and the present condition of the Reformed Churches in Europe.

trophesan pre-eminence, and a false security reversed the aggressive attitude the church was intended ever to maintain.

It is in field service, or when battering the strong bastions of the enemy, that the Christian soldier is hardened, educated, and developed. The banner which bears aloft his only motto, LOVE, precludes every other outward inscription that does not carry to the heart a *crucifix* for every sin. Every new enlistment and every conquest, our theory supposes, is to augment the moral force of the great army.

But just here let this favorite figure, which has been made to teach an error by being carried too far, be limited to its true intent. It is not as an army, represented by platoons, regiments, and battalions, that the church is to do most effective execution ; or certainly not in any form of organism that precludes the personal contact face to face. Our Sunday school system should not, and it does not, preclude this, but rather facilitates it. It is a *guerilla* warfare that we wage, as well against our own lusts as against the common enemy. It must be by individual conflict with individual passions and persons, that, as a *general rule*, accessions to Christ's kingdom are to be expected.

Every Christian, then, is to choose that place where Providence indicates that he can render the most effectual service to the kingdom he seeks to advance, and against that kingdom which his faith assures him shall fall. Individuals and wealthy families must choose their locations with reference to this service. A "retired" Christian is worse than a misnomer; for it implies a contradiction. Death is his only retirement. No other furlough is known in the tactics of Christian warfare. Here we would suggest that, *short of South Africa*, is a vast field to be covered. Not an empire, state, county, city, or town but would be greatly benefited by a more equal distribution of Christian individuals and families. Churches, instead of being built to pander to our pride and luxurious ease, should be located with reference to the character of the population around them. The rule should invariably be to intersect, or, if we shall be understood, to cut the community, perpendicularly, and not, as now, horizontally, separating the rich from the poor. Were this rule of distribution observed, with very little self-denial, every individual in Great Britain and the United States would be brought within convenient distance of a place

of worship.* But, as it is, the churches are comparatively empty. Were every Christian to be but the means of converting one person in a year, in two years and three quarters every individual in the United States would be a Christian. Carry out the process, and in six years and a quarter the whole world would not only have the Gospel, but every heathen would be converted.†

* There were in the United States in 1850, church accommodations for 14,234,825 (of which twelve millions and a half are of denominations called Evangelical), for a population of 23,191,000; thus providing for about two-thirds of the whole, which is as many as can be expected to attend at one time. There is also a minister to every 867 souls,—and we may safely assume one *evangelical* minister to every 1,000. If these were equally distributed, all the people would be well supplied, both with churches and ministers. But many of our small towns and select portions of our cities have more than they need, while the masses in the cities and the sparse population of the country are neglected.

† The *Presbyterian Almanac* for 1854 gives the number of members of churches in the United States, 3,776,319. The following process will show the result we have reached: $3,776,319 \times 2 = 7,552,628 \times 2 = 15,105,276 \times \frac{3}{4} + = 26,434,198$, allowing for an increase of 10 per cent. So that two years and three-quarters would suffice to convert the whole population of the United States. It is estimated that there are 12,000,000 of true evangelical Christians in the world. Let us carry out the same process: $12,000,000 \times 2 = 24,000,000 \times 2 = 48,000,000 \times 2 = 96,000,000 \times 2 = 192,000,000 \times 2 = 384,000,000 \times 2 = 768,000,000 \times \frac{1}{4} + = 960,000,000 - 6\frac{1}{4}$ years. We do not here add any thing for increase, as in most heathen lands the population is diminishing. Did any Christian ever labor and pray earnestly for the conversion of a soul for one

Christian, begin to-day ! and (if you will not change your residence) rebuke, as you have authority to do, the first profane swearer that pollutes the air you breathe ; the first false witness expose, and bring to repentance ; the first political or moral perfidy, private or public, arraign at the bar of conscience ; throw around the victim of vice and degradation, your sympathies, but fail not to let him know and see the viper that has bitten him. There are Christian men enough, there is intelligence enough, strength enough, enterprise enough, everything enough ; but for our supineness and love of ease, our divisions, our envy, our mutual jealousies, our love of Mammon, our treachery, not a dark cavern of sin in Christendom but would be explored, purified, nay, perfumed with the breath of Sharon's rose, before the sun of 1856 should set.

year with the same diligence, zeal, and expectation that he carries into his daily business, without success ? If not, does it not prove the above to be a practicable scheme, under God, for the conversion of the world ?

CHAPTER IV.

TEACHERS' MEETING.

GLANCING through the history of the past, the most prominent objects that catch and fix our attention are the camps and the courts of nations. Other objects are presented by the tongue of the orator, or the pen of the scribe, only as correlative and subordinate. The inventions of genius, the wisdom of philosophers, and the counsel of sages, according to the popular estimate of all ages, have had little to do hitherto in guiding the physical forces of society. Slow, indeed, has been, and still is, our progress; but yet, are there not some indications that we are approaching an era that shall inaugurate other forces? Though the sulphuric clouds of war still linger here and there, and newspaper editors professing Christianity are not wanting to taunt and goad to national slaughter, and governments are found sufficiently chivalric and savage, with the aid

of alcohol, to keep watch for an occasion to let loose gunpowder and deadly weapons, and the kennel of war-dogs, at their mercenary bidding ; yet the forces of Christianity are making progress. Scarcely is there a national sin, but there is now some weapon already forged, or some armory erecting to bring it forth, ere long to glitter in the hands of the spiritual host. Surely the world cannot much longer fail to discern the supreme power for good that there was in that "upper chamber," where twelve men were permitted to look out upon a world already prophetically conquered by the power of truth. True they did not, they might not, anticipate the long time that treachery and supineness would defer the conquest ; hence the earnest manner in which they undertook their work. Had some sparks of their zeal kindled a flame of equal intensity along the line of advancing centuries, what would have been the present condition of our world ? But there is a rekindling in other "chambers." The power of truth is beginning to be felt anew. Within less than eighty years, is it too much to say that the Sabbath School has more than duplicated that power ; nay, increased it many fold ? When it shall be again redoubled, again and

again, we may then begin to estimate. As yet, we have no arithmetic to calculate these forces. We only propose to increase them until the light shall be sufficiently augmented to see both the past and present darkness, and then possibly will the world be aroused to consistent action. The idea we here wish most to lodge in the mind of the thoughtful Christian, not to say the philanthropist, is this: that the force that is to benefit this world is not a gunpowder force. Common as *thinking* is, it is this that is the basis of hope for the future. Cheap as *talking* is, it is this that has done and that will do all the real good in the world. The benefactors of the race have not been Alexanders, Napoleons, nor even Washingtons; for what could the latter have done without a moral force to wield? It was this that gave us all the victory we have, worth retaining. The generals of humanity have not been epauletted or commissioned by earthly powers, nor will they ever be. Galileo and Newton, Faust, Fulton, Arkwright, Watt and Whitney, Martin Luther, Whitefield and Robert Raikes—these, and others like them, are the men to whom the world owes its progress. Justinian, Cromwell, Milton, Locke, Bacon, Matthew Hale, our own

Franklin, and their compeers, are our real rulers. The governor of this republic is more *intrinsically* the Sabbath-school teacher, who drops a word of truth that shapes the moral life and development of the child, than any senator that ever commanded the vote of Congress.

From this stand-point we are able to see that the Teachers' Meeting is the most important legislative hall in our republic. If the palladium of our liberty can be demonstrated to be the primary political meeting, it can be a thousand-fold more clearly demonstrated to the man who has an eye to see it, that the primary political meeting stands or falls according to the moral character of its constituents. It is in this point of view, dear teacher, that we must invite you to your weekly meeting. It is for the relation between cause and effect that we thus earnestly urge your attendance here, as an indispensable pre-requisite to your qualification to enter the Sabbath-school room. This little community of Sabbath-school teachers, so full of indispensable moral forces, so big and hourly swelling with the most important results, is your spiritual arsenal. Here are you to obtain your weapons, with which to go forth to battle.

Unless you can come here, you cannot know the teachers of the school. You may, indeed, strike now and then a random blow ; but you cannot maneuver with the rest of the army. You can only know your place by learning it here. True, your fight may be a personal one ; but the field can never be intelligently surveyed, and all your plans be judiciously laid, without the manifold blessings of this meeting. Here, you must not only study your books, but mature your graces. Here, you must kindle anew your love and enthusiasm ; here catch a glance of the road you are to travel, and of the objects of interest by the way ; amid the confidence and love of your associates, give and receive the cheers of hope and courage. Yes, and here anticipate the day of final rejoicing, when, at the end of the fierce conflict, you may be permitted, under the shade of the tree of life, on the banks of the river of God, to review with those whom you have won to Christ, the mysterious way in which you have come to such glories. And then will you strike your harp with a more rapturous hand, as you sing with them the new song of Moses and the Lamb.

For the character of the teachers' meeting,

the superintendent is to hold himself responsible. Except the "Great Sabbath School Teacher of the Congregation," no one in the whole range of religious organizations occupies a post of more important trust, or more extensive usefulness. There is no versatility of talent, no amount of learning, but may be employed here to the best advantage. The school is, in a high and important sense, dependent upon his skill in obtaining teachers,* and attaching them to it; in educating them for the proper discharge of their duties; and in the general drift and conduct of its sessions. For accomplishing these results, the teachers'

* If the superintendent is not, himself, a member of the session, committee, or other official board having charge of receiving members, he should be in weekly correspondence with some one who is. He should procure the names and residence of those recently admitted, and immediately call upon them, and persuade them to occupy some post of usefulness in the Sabbath School. This, it will be perceived, is a favorable time, on many accounts, for such an undertaking. This duty, successfully performed, will prevent that standing complaint, "We are in want of teachers." This method is needful also to prevent, on the part of new members, the complaint that they are not acquainted. But who would covet the acquaintance of an inactive Christian, not disabled by age or sickness? This duty, indeed, should be superseded by the voluntary offer of these individuals; but the millenium has not yet dawned. We are only trying to lead each other in a darkness, which we hope and pray may but shortly precede it.

meeting places in his hands all the instruments. Here, more than anywhere else, will he learn how to adapt all the powers of his mind to the development of each Teacher; and here he will observe their fitness for the several trusts he assigns to them. To do this in no offensive manner, will require much study. His present reward is, the love and approbation of a precious band of believers, being trained, and in turn training others, for a Teachers' Meeting in heaven that shall never break up. The truths studied here are for review and for study as the theses of everlasting thought, thanksgiving, and praise. High as we place this standard, Christian brother, do not hesitate, if fairly called, to assume this office, and covet the best gifts. You have a right to expect, and doubtless will receive, that charity, which the franchise of a Christian vote more than guarantees. As has already been more than hinted, this meeting is for the building of a spiritual edifice, in which the superintendent may be considered as the architect, the teachers the workmen; the materials to be quarried from the surrounding neighborhood. As our system is an educational one throughout, it is necessary to keep every part advancing,

step by step, to higher attainment. After a school is well organized, and a proper place ascertained for every thing, it will not be necessary for the superintendent personally to be the chairman or conductor of these meetings. To allow the teachers, in turn, to take charge of the meeting, will exercise their gifts and give them great confidence, without detracting from the general interest of the meeting, if other hints and rules are fully observed.

We would not here repress the spontaneous emotions of Christian fellowship, always enkindled at such gatherings. Yet, tempting as conversation now is, if the minute has arrived for opening the meeting, all conversation should cease instantly. All through the meeting, the "unruly member" must be kept in check, except for the edification of all. Every one has brought a contribution to the feast; but every one may carry away much more than he has brought, by carefully gleaning a little from every word that is spoken in the class. The chairman, therefore, should repress the first whisper that does not relate to the subject under consideration, as disorderly. He must also see to it, that, in limiting his questions to any printed book, or the business

to any fixed forms, he does not render the answering or reporting so purely mechanical as not to keep up a wakeful interest. The object should be to keep the faculties of every one in profitable occupation, so that, when the meeting shall close, all will be glad to have another, just like it "*now*." Little indulgences will prevent this feeling, and when the time for another meeting shall arrive, it will be found that these very indulgences are a reason why you do not feel it to be very important to be punctually on hand. Perhaps the punctiliousness we insist upon will provoke your smile ; but we hope not your patience, much less your temper. You must constantly bear in mind that you are "builders" in a spiritual temple. The common idea that a Sabbath school is made up of little things, is a false one. Here, there are no little things. Every touch of your finger, every exhalation of your breath, is like the invisible ink, inscribing letters on the polished tablet of the mind and heart, now indeed legible to God alone, but soon to blaze with significant meaning in the eyes of men and angels. These superscriptions are soon again to be written on the interior being of your pupils, and become eternized there, to the

glory or shame of your teaching and their improvement of it. Surely, nothing in this relation can be said to be little. But we must onward to "a way to do it."

When the hour of meeting arrives, even if there is but one teacher present, the chairman should commence the meeting by singing a hymn; or, if unable to sing,* he may read a hymn, and proceed systematically and good-naturedly through all the exercises, to the close of the meeting. If, for a few evenings, he thus labors and prays for the success of the school, he will be heard, especially if he has one or two with him, to bring him within the chartered rights secured by Christ's promises. If but few are present at the opening, it will then do to read aloud all you intend to sing of a hymn; but if all are present, no *time* should be taken to read more than one verse, and the sentiment of the hymn should be left first to strike the ear in the harmony of sound. Rarely should more than two or three verses of a

* If possible to avoid it, this should never be the case; for singing is an almost indispensable requisite for a superintendent. However, this defect may, in part, be remedied, by securing the attendance of a good singer, who can be always relied upon for taking the lead in this exercise.

hymn be sung, lest instead of the feeling being intensified, much of it should be lost in senseless sound. Watch nothing so closely as mere formal proceedings of any kind. These will not only waste your time, but enervate your spirit. Immediately after the hymn, a short prayer should follow, for the object immediately before you, asking for no blessings of which the need is not felt. No male teacher, if a professor, should be excused from this service; and the superintendent should frown out of the very presence of the school all criticism, as a daring intrusion of the enemy of all righteousness.

The meeting being opened, the secretary (who should be competent to keep them) should then read in a loud, clear voice, the minutes of the previous meeting. These minutes should not fail to notice *every thing* which was done, and in such a way as to reproduce the good effect of it, so that, in spirit, if possible, every meeting shall begin at a point of interest where the previous one closed. No practice can be more necessary to the meeting or more profitable to all the teachers. On this alone very much depends; for the interest of the meeting, and through it the school,

must be kept historically progressive. These minutes should be read from materials carefully observed, and noted on a loose piece of paper, at each meeting; and as soon as read, if correct, should be approved by a regular motion, promptly seconded, and voted on in a loud and distinct voice, by every person in the room, male and female. A voice that is silent, will lose to its owner a great interest by refusing to say simply Aye or No. The chairman who lets any question pass without being voted upon by every one in the room, does the meeting an injustice, and the cause of the school a damage.

There is no question connected with a Sabbath School, or any spiritual interest, that is trifling. But perhaps the chairman or teachers may say it is too obviously right or wrong to require the formality of a vote. This is the only place where *form* is not *formality*. Here no two questions take precisely the same track, and every one will receive a compound interest by being moved regularly and voted upon spiritedly and distinctly. If any teacher insists upon silence, it would be proper to determine by vote whether he or she should be excused for

the reason offered. The chairman or superintendent should always keep every question, however plain or intricate, in a perfectly parliamentary shape before the meeting. This is not only for the interest of the meeting, but it will in the end save a vast amount of time, confusion, indifference, and final habits of carelessness, which would place in jeopardy any institution in the land, great or small.

In an enterprising, active, aggressive school, many things will here press upon the recollection of superintendent and teachers, and prompt suggestions, which will immediately kindle into a general flame. Every thing that can benefit or encourage the superintendent or teachers, or profit the district to which any teacher belongs, or any individual in it, may properly receive attention at this time. But care must be taken by the chair to prevent the loss of an instant of time. A teacher must not feel injured, although the chairman should suddenly and even abruptly interrupt him or request him to condense his statement. This, kindly received, will do much for the profit of all present, whose time is precious; all will learn from it the necessity

of rapid motion; and subsequent hurry and want of time will be avoided.

The moderator should keep *dispatch* so constantly in mind, that, if it were possible, all that concerns the soul's interests, for time and eternity, should be crowded into the first half hour of the meeting. This extravagant expression would find no justification, but in the design to effectually rebuke a practice of consuming the first half of every religious meeting in prosy, formal proceedings. To remedy this evil, so provokingly obnoxious, most important matters are hurried over, amid general confusion, or omitted altogether; and with a stolidity and inefficiency, that, in worldly matters, would be considered unpardonable. Great merit is often claimed for closing a meeting "promptly," just where it should be begun, the time having been stupidly squandered. The miscellaneous business being properly done up, with all possible force and perspicuity, taking care that every thing is so left as to bring out future results, the chairman should first declare the number of teachers that belong to the school, state the number present on the previous Sabbath, and, in case of absence, the cause, in a becoming

manner ; and then proceed to hear the reports of teachers as to the condition of their classes, and attendance on the previous Sabbath. This questioning should always proceed regularly round the room with the sun (varying always for a reason), and the questions and answers should run thus :

QUEST. How many scholars have you, Mr. A—?

ANS. Six ; two absent, four present ; visited or not ; cause of absence stated.

QUEST. Any evidence of extraordinary interest, or any thing to communicate ?

Here the teacher will bring in rapid review the district assigned him for general visitation. This is entirely distinct from the visits to absent scholars, or those families from which his pupils come. If families visited are in want of temporal or spiritual aid, which the teacher cannot render, provision should here be made for them. Any object of interest described in this visitation, any experiences that may profit others, should here be distinctly stated. Arguments answered, difficulties overcome, and the way of doing it briefly stated, will give a missionary character to the meeting,

without which the whole thing will sag into irretrievable monotony. When your meeting and your school fail to come into co-operative and active sympathy with the temporal and spiritual condition of outside humanity, then and there begins a spiritual decay, which will soon render your school an irksome place, if not an empty one, and finally result in the surrender of the commission you receive from your Master, to "*go and preach the Gospel to every creature.*"

Ladies, particularly, should answer in a distinct tone of voice, which all may hear, and that will even arrest attention, if it should be wandering.

This completed, and a word added by the superintendent, stating the spiritual condition of the school, so far as derived from a general observation, the lesson may be taken up. The teachers who complain most that the lesson is not reached soon enough, will be found to be those who care least for the general interest of the school, and are least of all anxious to go before their classes with a quickening from the word and Spirit of God.

The lesson should now be taken up as the climax to all the previous proceedings. The

edifice being erected, the presiding Spirit must now take possession and fill it. The questioning should proceed regularly round the room, from left to right. Every one may profitably have in hand a volume of Union Questions; but great caution is necessary, lest these question books render the proceedings mechanical, and do injury rather than good. Helps these question books doubtless are to all; but to an unintelligent teacher, they may do much to enervate the mind, if not to injure the spirituality of the learner. We would avoid any confinement to them, much more any limitation, that would not permit a fresh and free questioning from the chair to every teacher, and *vice versa*. Simple and easy questions may be often asked, not only for edification, but to preserve the completeness of the subject, and to place the teacher in the attitude of a child.

The watchful chairman will often detect little blemishes or leaks in the teachers' meeting, which it will tax his utmost ingenuity to prevent. Sometimes considerable time is lost while a teacher is finding a passage of Scripture referred to in the question book. If there are many references in a lesson, he may request the teachers to find them in order, each taking

one, from left to right, until the whole are found; and when the time arrives for them they are ready. We pass so many gates in life, that our journey will be much impeded, unless we have the fee in hand before we stop the carriage. But it would be much better, as will be the case in all good schools, if the lessons were so thoroughly studied that all the questions could be promptly answered, and the subject perfectly canvassed, from memory, without turning to the references at all. Better yet, if all books were left at home, and every thing relating to the lesson so completely in the memory as to have no need of them. We have heard of a teachers' meeting in which the interest was increased many fold by the adoption of this measure.

The chair should strive to make every subject luminous, and enrich it with research and his own experience. There should also emanate from the consideration of every truth, a felt obligation to make it known to others, and "a way to do it." Often dilute, as well as season it, for it is generally lambs you are feeding. Pains should also be taken to keep in mind the preciousness of gospel truth, as well as its obligations. Some one has said that

Americans feel the *obligations* of the Gospel, but European Christians the *love* and *privileges* of it. Neither should be forgotten or unfelt. Here the full-orbed blaze of a spiritual illumination should so fill the place, as evermore to constitute the teachers' meeting a mount of transfiguration. To dwell upon manner and method here, would be rather cramping invention than aiding imagination. So full and so free should be the mutual interchange of sentiment, that, in such a meeting, it would be impossible to repress the rising emotions of love to God and one another, as the Word of Life is here contemplated. Nowhere else on this earth is there such an opportunity to catch fire from the sparks that may fall from off the altar of heaven. Nowhere else could we hope that the flame of love would burn so intensely, as while here under its very central meridian. The icy pillars that sustain systems of sin and selfishness must here melt away. The crustations of sectarian Christianity will here become brittle, or consume like wax in a furnace. When a teachers' meeting is kindled into such a glow, any thing short of the immediate conversion of the pupils will be impatiently considered. Anecdote, sacred geography, Jewish customs, evi-

dences of the inspiration of the Scriptures, internal and external, together with Christian theology, and all forms of false religion, may here be brought under review. But these are but dust, chaff, and scaffolding to the edifice, except as means to an end. How to bring the renewing power of the Holy Ghost into contact with the pupil's heart, is the subject of every lesson, the theme that inspires every stage of the investigation. The wisest student of science, or of moral or mental philosophy, is to hold all his acquirements tributary to this one end—the conversion of the pupil. The teachers' meeting that does not beget this desire, fails of the end of its appointment. The investigations of the lesson, then, should all be conducted with this one paramount object.

The meeting should be closed with singing one or two verses, and prayer, short, fervent, always effective and prevalent. In proportion to its brevity, and not in proportion to its length, will this become the real, but never the formal, fellowship of saints on-earth, and like to that above.

The teachers' meeting will inevitably dissipate the gloom that habitually lowers upon the countenances of some good sort of

people. Neither the cold austerities of the ascetic, nor the idiotic formalities of the monk's cell, can gain entrance here. Often, indeed, the subject under consideration will make it a most solemn place; but these will be but clouds intercepting a perpetual sunshine, only to water and refresh the budding graces in every heart. The smile, nay, the laugh, here, is the gush of the soul; the overflowing of a joy the worldling cannot mimic, for he is a stranger to the sweetness of this heavenly manna.

Sweetened as teachers' meetings often are, and should always be, with such heavenly influences, it is sometimes the case that this very joyfulness is swallowed up by a social interview that succeeds such a meeting. The social feeling of the family relation and that of Christians to one another, may easily be conceived to be the dearest on earth. This may properly be admitted into any Christian circle, but to none with more propriety than where many are so intimately related in the same organization. But when the social supersedes the spiritual, or is felt to be absorbing so much of it as to endanger the ever-increasing predominance of the latter, it should be checked; and the superintendent should see to it that every teachers'

meeting is becomingly dispersed, at a proper hour.

As to the time and place of holding a teachers' meeting, it will be safe to leave them to a vote of the teachers, who are most competent to judge of them, with the simple observation that they should not be rendered transitory, by being held less than a month in one place; and that, when the social principle is wanting in a school, the parlor, rather than the school or committee-room, is much more favorable for its introduction. Alternations from the one to the other, when circumstances favor, may preserve a golden mean.

Before dismissing this subject, we should not fail to suggest that, while the superintendent is always to be held responsible for the entire conduct of this meeting, he should not fail to keep in mind that this is a school for the education of his teachers, from which there is no graduation but to a pulpit. It is to be hoped that the minister will be always present, if possible (especially if he possesses a faculty for enlivening, rather than repressing the meeting). The superintendent, however, should ever be the presiding genius, though not its ruling officer. His seat should be at the right hand of

the chairman, who should be a teacher educating himself by striving to learn experimentally how to conduct a meeting well. Four successive meetings, if he has any tact, will enable him to keep familiar with the routine of the school, without becoming monotonous to his fellows. The secretary should be at the left hand of the chair, always ready to supply any material or statistical facts.

We linger upon this theme, where we could delight to remain, only to add, what we fear is a needless precaution, that this meeting should refuse admission to those who are not teachers, whenever they are felt to embarrass the proceedings so as to defeat any of the designs of the meeting; which would be the case, if any of the proceedings should take the phase of formality. This meeting may be so widely diversified by the spirit and ingenuity of the chairman, superintendent, and teachers, as to meet the largest demand of a hungry and thirsting soul. Once a month, or oftener, under increasing influences of the Holy Ghost, the whole meeting may be occupied with devotions and experiences. Meantime, the teachers may depend alone upon their private study of the lesson. (See *Self-Culture*, No. 14.)

By experiences, we mean every variety of success in teaching and visiting, in the district allotted him, or among his own pupils, and every phase of religious experience. Often should the conversation of a teacher with his class, or any persons visited, be detailed, if such conversation may be made available by his fellow teachers. This religious experience, of *one*, all have a right to know. This is the end of a conference meeting. Especially here should Sabbath-school spiritual experience be often told. The writer remembers, with heartfelt emotions, a meeting of this kind, when all were called upon to relate the circumstances of their conversion. There were present in a school but recently organized, forty or fifty teachers, most of whom had but just been converted. For want of Christian teachers, and those of more experience, many of these had been induced to take classes in a school for the instruction of poor children. As the inquiry proceeded, a large proportion gave most interesting descriptions of the mother's prayers and influence developed and brought out into renewed activity and energy in the Sabbath-school room.*

* We can hardly repress our feelings at this point, even if we

A D D E N D A .

IN the more populous and unevangelized portions of our country, and of all Christian countries, those who profess personal attachment to Christ, and who honestly intend in any degree to co-operate with him in the extension of his kingdom, should lose no time in forming an organization for a weekly interview, encouragement, and counsel. This can hardly be so well done by a church organization; for that will embrace the feeble with the strong,—some too old, and some too young, to engage in aggressive co-operation. Such a meeting may, however, be composed of members of any one

had the moral right to do so, in view of a fact which ought to have led the human instrument of it, to pursue the vocation there so signally owned and blessed of heaven. Mr. K. was then a young man, and had been preaching both in the upper and lower wards of the city of New York, with unequivocal evidence that his calling was that of an evangelist. Eight of this little gathering (if the writer remembers correctly) had heard the preacher in four or five different churches, and in as many different sermons, urge the immediate obligations of repentance; and attributed their conversion to this cause. As they named the text, the course of remark, recollecting their experience, now so precious, the subdued but joyful gushes of gratitude, electrified the meeting; and the very silence that ensued was as the rushing of a wind from heaven, a divided flame, whose *aureola* seemed to surround each of them. Acts, ii. 2, 3.

church, or any number of churches of various denominations, who can be persuaded to unite in organic action, for carrying the truths of the Gospel into every household, rich or poor, high or low. If there are not found those who already feel that the extremes of denominationalism, are no obstacles to such associations, they will learn it by profitable experience, so soon as they commence their meetings and their labors.

The book of the Acts already sets forth the flexibility of all Christian institutions, and their permanency also. In the spirit of the Apostles, assembled in such a meeting, the labor should be commenced. The first subject for consideration may be the demarkation of boundaries for Christian visitation. These may be limited to a single house or to a neighborhood, according to the number and capacity of those who are willing to undertake the work. Nothing could be more edifying than the reports of those who should thus sally forth on the most important embassy ever undertaken by man or angel. Prayer in such a meeting will not be aimless, objectless, or inefficient, nor will hearts fail to burn with a heavenly intensity. Records of all personal

experience may be so kept that progress shall be clearly defined, and means adapted to ends. Such meetings are especially teachers' meetings, although the Bible may not be studied. It should, however, always be read in them, and generally the book of the Acts of the Apostles. Such a meeting may be continued for weeks and months, without bringing any of the visited into visible relation to each other. Such an organization would be essentially a Teachers' Meeting in its mode of procedure, and should keep in view the ultimate formation of a Sabbath school, to be commenced when all the materials are ripe for being brought together into an organized relation. But if this should never be the result, such an organization would do much more good than many expensive churches are now doing, and vastly more than is done by those schools which have not adopted any mode of aggressive action. Such meetings may be most profitably the preliminary steps to all Sabbath-school formations. They should be continued till the objects for which these visitors are brought together are distinctly understood.

Such a teachers' meeting may exist without

a school-room or a scholar, with more direct and reflex advantages than are gained by hundreds who hardly know wherefore they are come together. The simple object of bringing souls to embrace Christ, kept thus in view, will do more to educate and edify the Christian, than a whole life of mere passive profession.

CHAPTER V.

SESSIONS.

SECTION I.—*Reasons for two Sessions.*

IN a country so vast as ours, in geographical extent, various in degrees of climate and of habits, of customs, languages, and nationalities, it would be worse than useless to insist upon specific uniformity of practice, except in a very few particulars. Nor is it reasonable to expect more than identity of object and interest, with conformity to the best plans and usages practicable in the circumstances peculiar to every community. Here, however, there should be a nice distinction between *physical* and *moral* difficulties to be overcome. It can be no objection to a *good* practice that it has not been the *custom*. And we should carefully inquire whether the neglect of a good thing is owing to love of ease, and slothful satisfaction in present attainment, want of tact, of perseverance, &c., or to an impossibility growing out of local obstructions.

On no point will the friends of our cherished institution be found to differ more widely than in the time most profitable and proper to be appropriated to the sessions of the Sabbath School.

The most common objection we meet against two sessions a day, especially in cities, is the want of time for rest and personal improvement on the part of teachers. Such are the habits, customs, and expenses of city life, that the Sabbath arrests the Christian, belabored and beleaguered in his hot pursuit of the objects that press upon every faculty of his mind, as the air presses upon every pore of his system. Overcome with this fatigue, but for respectable appearances he would gladly assign the whole day to mere physical repose, or possibly relieve its tedium, if exhausted nature should sufficiently rally, by reading a few pages of some book that should not too much tax his mind. But the ringing of the church bell disturbs this repose, and he must go to church to maintain any decent show of profession ; and if he goes once to the Sabbath school, he is regarding himself, and so expects to be esteemed, as rather an extraordinary Christian, —if not quite a saint, certainly in a fair way to

accomplish much more than many do who have made a profession of religion as loud as his.

The only answer to all this is, if this must be so and there is no remedy, if the world cannot be subordinated to the kingdom of Christ in any such way as to meet the obligations you took upon you when you made a profession of religion, then, perhaps, there ought to be some way by which you can renounce your profession, and live more consistently; as a profession of Christianity always implies activity in Christ's service. A mere genteel conformity to the life and customs of well regulated society is no Christianity; and your profession will only annoy without materially helping you, and be one of the examples to which the world look to justify their guilty indifference to the subject of religion. To no other conceivable cause can we attribute the slow progress that Christianity has made in the world, but to the lives of its professors. Do you pretend to say that the reason why Mohammedanism has outrun Christianity is, that it does not run counter to the natural appetites and desires of our corrupt and fallen natures? Is it no answer to this, that we are able to say that

there is power in truth that error does not possess, that God's power is not only sufficient,* but conquest is even vouchsafed to every faithful follower. The great answer, in our humble estimation, lies in this, that the Mohammedan professor is consistent, but the Christian professor is not consistent.†

One year's consistent living, by all who profess Christianity, would do more to convert the world than any one or any five centuries have yet done. Once let eternal things take that rational possession of the mind which their paramount importance demands, and a moral earthquake would be the immediate result. Do you think that the enterprises of civilization would be disturbed by such a development? If this should be so, it would be no reason for our present monomania of worldliness. But see what *a little* Christianity has done to de-

* See "*New Themes for Protestant Pulpit.*"

† Five times a day the *muezzin* from the top of the mosque calls the people to prayer; and the moment they hear the cry they run to the mosque, or prostrate themselves in the street, or wherever they happen to be; and though a fire should break out in the Moslem's chamber, he would not stop to put it out till his prayer was ended. When he wields the sword to propagate his religion, he is but carrying out its principles. See "*False Prophet,*" by Newcomb.

velop the energies of the race; and by your rule of three, which you apply to every thing else, see what would be the result in this world if the other dormant 800 millions were once aroused by its energizing power. The chains of superstition that now bind men, would snap and consume like a flaxen flake in the glowing heat of a furnace, and the whole world would be clothed in a beauty not yet conceived by the student of millennial glory. By the very imperfect example of the power of Christianity, in the most favored spot on the face of the globe, where as yet not one man in four even professes religion, we can see what this glorious revelation of life and immortality has power to do for us, if once carried on to its obvious consummation. But this cannot be done so long as one "*live*" Christian has to carry twenty *dead* ones. We are pleading with you, to arouse you to the importance of taking time for this work of the Sabbath School; not that bringing your body into punctual habits of attendance (even if this were but possible), would accomplish the work. It is your heart that must be enlisted, or you will seek your own, not God's glory; and this will most assuredly defeat the end in

view. We would prefer the present outward profession, and the present cold formality, yea, indifference, yea, contempt, to a whole carcass of dead humanity in this service. Not so loathsome is the garnished cenotaph, as the putrefying sepulchre of the dead. We ask not your body first, that, by some physical screwing and mental cramp, you may hope to get yourself into an attitude of love, forcing your spirit to it, with the fears of hell, the stings of conscience, and self-loathing of conscious ingratitude. No ; we ask you to kindle the flame of your affections in your closets, and come with joyous, cheerful step to the school-room at the appointed hours. Let the exercise of your heavenly endowment have a natural not a forced action here. Set before you the glorious character of the work, the value of the soul, the warnings of eternity, and the scenery of heaven, with which you may refresh your prospect, as often as you please ; for at every tick of your watch is your salvation nearer than when you believed. And will not these considerations move you in love to the discharge of these duties ?—then, indeed, we have but little to hope from your connection with the school. But remembering our own

stolidity in the school of Christ, we still tenderly invite you to come, "though we thus speak." Forgive us, that we should hold up such a picture, when we must own that we have not been enraptured by it. Let not our standard, nor yet our exhortation for a moment prevent the discharge of present duty, lest Satan get the advantage, by making present unfitness a hindrance to future improvement.

From the most superficial reader of the Bible, we fear no charge of distortion; for even he has not failed to discover that the Bible calls for a consecration that cannot be exaggerated.* The objects of time have so intercepted our vision of eternal things, and benumbed our sensibilities, that we can only apprehend these truths by meditating upon their importance, and yielding obedience to the commands of God and the convictions of our consciences. The confessions in our prayers, when there is no real purpose of reform, must no longer be regarded as an atonement for our sins, or offered instead of ourselves upon the altar of sacrifice; for this fancied merit is but

* Luke, xiv. 26: "Hate father and mother." Mat., viii. 22: "Let the dead bury their dead."

a stench of selfishness. One of the most common and obvious remarks now made among Christians is this, that if no direct good were ever done to the taught, the reflex advantages to the teacher and the church generally, would more than compensate for all the cost of the Sabbath School. If it is true that nowhere else is the Christian armor to be kept bright, for that few, comparatively, are striking any blows upon the kingdom of darkness that are not laborers here,—it is equally true that this advantage cannot be gained to the individual Christian, and thus to the church generally, without the adoption of the very discipline we are advocating in these pages. What more bombastic than the vaunting of this great system before the gaze of Christendom, with one hour and a quarter devoted to it in a week! And will not the men of the world judge of it as in good keeping with other pretensions about the importance of religion, upon which the pretenders do not act themselves? A man of sense may give its claims a contemptuous glance, and turn indifferently away, concluding, reasonably enough, that the friends of such a system, if they thought much of it themselves, would not treat it as a mere inci-

dental obtrusion upon the hours of rest or recreation. Were this system expected to work out any such result as is claimed for it, they would not talk of the great sacrifice of two or three hours a week for it. Truly, it is the adage reversed, the mouse laboring to bring forth a mountain! The vast machinery that is paraded, with numbers, and banners flying, the enemy will say, is some clap-trap, to catch popular treasure, perhaps a little money to support some agencies. Such are the too obvious inferences from an hour's session of the Sabbath school. Would we were not compelled to add, they are just! True, God has in mercy granted great results, even from this mere skeleton; but only to enable us to see what the power of the Gospel is capable of accomplishing, if constantly and faithfully applied.

Again, it is often urged against two sessions a day, especially by "genteel families," that the children cannot "endure" so much application. Parental pity and sympathy swell here to the overflowing, and often authoritatively contravene the wishes and sweetest instincts of the child, by forbidding the attendance. Thus we find these "poor sufferers" escaping the hard-

ships of the Sabbath School room, and many of them spending the Sabbath in the less pleasurable frolic of the parlor or the nursery. These are the children who, when a little older, on Sabbath afternoon and evening, crowd the avenues of horse-pleasure and the corners of the streets, the retirement of the grove, and the debauchery of the drinking saloon.* Many of the youth that the Sabbath School teacher sees in the streets, or at such places as we have described, were at the Sabbath School in the morning, and sat out their hour in distaste and disgust of a system that did not take time enough to enlist them in the object of its organization. They, too, could see through the shallow pretenses of the co-operators in a work that did not command the love of the teacher in any such way as to engage him earnestly in it. Nothing the eagle eye of youth penetrates so

* In a recent Sabbath school Convention at Boston, a city missionary stated that he had seen a thousand well-dressed young men on one of the wharves of that city, of a Sabbath day; and any person passing the segar-shops and drinking-saloons of New York and Brooklyn, in a fair day, may see squads of well-dressed young men hanging about these places, smoking and swearing. Ask them to go to Sabbath school, and they will reply, "We belong to ——— Street School!" Others are seen driving "fast horses" to the rural retreats and scenes of dissipation and debauchery in our suburbs,

easily as this "much ado about nothing." His inferences are consistent and logical. Spare your words, if you have no more consistent action than you now present to the child. They will only the more thoroughly teach the other way, in spite of your precepts and assumptions. This is poisoning at the fountain. The chances are fatally against a recovery, when the twig has taken its direction under such influences. Parent, teacher, do you wonder? You have no occasion for wonder or surprise. The results are all legitimate, and could be as accurately foretold or anticipated as effect follows cause. The day school can have the best teachers*employed five hours a day, and five days in the week. Nay; no intelligent teacher would undertake the instruction of a child in the rules of grammar short of this. And there is no complaint of hardship or suffering from close application. But here are themes on which you and your children expect to spend their eternity, and yet fail to master them; and more than an hour is too much to spare to them now, though the happiness or misery of eternity may depend upon it. The ball-room may have more time than the Sabbath-school room; and yet no tears or groans over that

fatigue that has called forth the deep-drawn sigh for the sufferer in the Sabbath School. Forgive, dear parent, the plainness of this expostulation. On such a theme, it may be "impious to be calm," and we therefore venture thus earnestly to address you. We know your love to your child, and you will readily forgive any intensity of emotion, when standing by the bedside of your loved ones. There, in the faithfulness of that hour, you will ask for no apology for omitting a nice delicacy or shading, that should belong rather to the description of a landscape than the tragedy of death.

Our limits forbid further amplification here, though to every reason which we subjoin for two sessions a day, considerations equally forcible might be urged; nay, not an argument in favor of a Sabbath school at all, but issues in a strong plea for two sessions a day, in every city and village in the United States.

We select from volumes of reasons for two sessions, only such as press for utterance, and such as can be compressed into a line in this brief summary. We are, then, in favor of two sessions,—

Because, spiritual subjects are more important than any others, nay, than all others; and

because they are interesting just in proportion as they are investigated in the Bible and the Book of Nature;

Because, if one session were prolonged to two hours and a half, it would become tiresome to both teacher and taught; and no time short of this, once a week, would secure respect for the object of the institution, or enlist the best talent of the church;

Because, if those public exercises, which attract the children to the school, are omitted, a general interest is lost; if introduced with but one session, investigation, study, and instruction are to a great extent excluded;

Because, one session cannot admit of the variety of exercises necessary to constitute a good school, much less afford time for the development of a system susceptible of indefinite expansion;

Because, religious indifference increases or decreases, in inverse ratio,—*i. e.*, the man who has little religious knowledge wants less, the man who has much desires more;

Because, the subject of religion, as revealed in the Bible, in order to be generally understood, requires a colloquial, rather than a dogmatic or didactic mode of exposition. Sufficient

time must be had for this method of elucidation ;

Because of the inaccurate conceptions of Bible truth, resulting from the limited time appropriated to its study, and the consequent inconsistent teaching of Christian example ;

Because, as moral light increases in any community, the mutual commerce in spiritual things multiplies in a compound ratio ; and the attempt to supply all these ever-increasing wants, by demanding an inordinate amount of pastoral and pulpit labor, involves a suicide which puts in jeopardy all the institutions of Christianity ;

Because, such sacrifices as two sessions call for, are needful to discipline the mind and body of professors, and dissipate the idea of a selfish Christianity ;

Because, hearing without doing creates a diseased state of mind, which might be called spiritual dyspepsia. The labor of two sessions, with correlative duties, will do much to give healthful exercise, the want of which superinduces mental and spiritual disease ;

Because, wherever two sessions have once existed, and one of them has been abandoned, the immediate effect has been a reduction of

numbers, and a diminution of interest, often followed by a paralysis of the whole church ;

Because, it is on all hands admitted that mission or union schools, cannot healthfully exist, or have regularly one good session, without two ; which demonstrates the expediency of two sessions, where physical obstacles do not render it impracticable ;

Because, the only arguments urged against two sessions, are generally attributed to indifference or love of ease ;

Because, in schools properly conducted, if the question were left to the scholars, they would greatly prefer two sessions ;

Because, some of the worst consequences of one session, are now being experienced, in the disposition manifested by teachers to leave a school of one session for one of two ; or, what is equally disastrous, an attempt to go to one in the morning and another in the afternoon ;

Because, no thorough system of teaching can be carried out by one session ;

Because, with two, the good teacher feels every moment to be wanted with his class, and almost all public exercises a disagreeable interruption ;

Because, the largest congregations, with but

one session, generally have less than the smaller churches with two, and less additions on profession of faith ;

Because, no intelligent teacher would undertake the instruction of a child in the simplest lessons in the spelling-book, by giving one lesson a week, much less any parent pay for it ;

Because, the home instruction assumed, is too often groundless, and oftener without any system as an educational process ;

Because, our nation has undertaken the fearful experiment of educating the national *mind*, to the neglect of the *heart* ; for which purpose they employ five days of the week, while we, for the latter, adjudge an hour and a quarter sufficient ;

Because, if we could have but one, the latter is as much the more important as the *man* is better than the *animal* ;

Because, all such experiments have hitherto ended in national destruction ;*

Because, our system assumes to be educa-

* The education of the Spartan was to make him an iron machine for the destruction of his fellow ; the Greek, a quibbling philosopher ; the Roman, an ambitious soldier ; and, without Christianity, our theory is, to educate a nation of commercial sharpers.

tional, which is slow and requiring much time, and a theory that shall extend a moral influence to every ramification of life;

Because, the education of the animal, and not the man, only increases his power for evil, and insures the certainty of national destruction;

Because, instead of one session a week, we should have two on the Sabbath, and two on Wednesday or Thursday of each week of equal length, so long as our public school policy remains what it now is;

Because, with two sessions, if the time is properly improved, bloodless revolutions may be wrought throughout the world, which gunpowder, deadly weapons, and slaughter, vainly assaying to do, have made it an *Acelanda*;

Because, God's revealed method of first educating the heart, conspires with the voice of history, not only to show its importance, but the danger of reversing the theory; therefore the education of the heart should have *more*, rather than *less* time than that of the mind;

Because, the greatness of the object, and the vastness of the resources, must have time to secure such great results as the system is capable of accomplishing;

Because, with this appropriation of time and

talent, we have a competent ministry to welcome and educate all the emigration from other nations, and, in turn, give them teachers for the education of the residue ;

Because, although yesterday we were colonies, to-day we are empires, and to-morrow we shall be continents, a sufficient time will make the system commensurate with the moral wants of this extending area ;

Because, no other system of educational preparation has yet been conceived of as competent to secure these results ;

Because, if this education is not furnished, and our youth are taught in public schools, without religion, corrupt literature will flood the nation, and neither monarchical nor priestly despotism will be able to prevent an anarchy but faintly shadowed forth by the French Revolution ;

Because, so much time at least is necessary to secure any such maturity of a system, in one generation, as to be of any advantage to the next, and unite the denominational regiments into a general army upon union principles ;

Because, the wisest of men have concurred in declaring the Bible to be the best system of education, and in the best possible form and

arrangement, by history, by narrative, by biography, by parable, by rewards and penalties, to secure present and eternal happiness, if time were taken to make its provisions available to the end for which they are perfectly adapted ;

Because, if time were taken in any other way, there is no other ministry that can do it but that of the Sabbath-school teacher,—even angels could not do it in less time than we propose, if at all. This is revealed as the only practicable method ;

Because it is only by holding the moral feelings under the power of divine truth, for a sufficient length of time, that the lineaments of the divine image are impressed upon the heart.

SECTION II.—MORNING.

On the Way—Soliloquy.

ON the way to the school room, questions like these may aid the Teacher in his preparation to meet his class :

Has my preparation for the Sabbath been successful in neutralizing the intensity with

which I have prosecuted my daily vocation? Are all things now subordinated in my thoughts and affections to the glory of God? Have my morning devotions been so hurried, by want of proper forethought, that I find myself in a distracted frame of mind? Is my conception of the work to be performed this day well chosen and arranged, and clear to my own mind? Have the truths of the lesson reproduced the spirit of the Teachers' Meeting, and are these truths and the manner in which it is my purpose to illustrate them, so freshly in my own mind as to affect my heart? Am I purged of that selfish ambition which I have so often detected when I have retired from the school room, in time past? Have past failures humbled me, and have I now ground to hope for more success? Am I in such a spirit that God could give me evidence this day that my pupils have all become Christians the past week, without stirring up the gangrene of self-conceit and pride that yet lurks in my heart? Am I insensible to temptation and the voice of flattery? Have I expected that my prayers, if not answered before, will be to-day? Have I been betrayed into any sin the past week,

that the Holy Spirit is not a present power and God to me? Have I obtained assurance that my arguments will be able to carry conviction to the hearts of the children committed to my spiritual guidance? Have I seen all the absent members of my class, or if none were absent, some who were present; and did I succeed in interesting the families I visited in the great subject of their souls' salvation? Does my heart rejoice that I shall once more look upon the lovely faces of my scholars, and try to trace upon their yielding hearts the lineaments of my Saviour? Do I feel a painful solicitude lest I may separate from this one and that one without evidence that they are born again? Is that the strongest emotion of my heart? Is my love for my pupils drawn from a purer fountain than that I bear for any pursuit or object of life? Is my faith strong that I shall this day succeed where I have failed before, and that because of self-renunciation and assurance that the Holy Ghost is in me, inspiring prayer, hope, and a confidence that will not permit a doubt?

FIRST SESSION.

Before the clock shall have ceased striking the hour, with every scholar, teacher, and officer in his place, and all the class-books distributed, the signal for opening should be given. If but one scholar and one teacher be present, no matter what the weather, the school should commence and go systematically forward. The hymn to be sung being announced, in this case two or three verses may be properly read, though generally only one verse can be read without loss of time and damage to the effect of singing. None but cheerful, heart-stirring tunes should be sung at the commencement of school, (see Singing, chap. x.) The school being requested to rise, they should do so together. The pleasure and profit of the school room may be greatly enhanced by beauty of arrangement and precise concert in action. The uniformity that constitutes the pleasure of looking at a military company should be transferred to the school room; and the school may be requested to sit down and rise again until all do it together. This exercise will also impress

the pupils with the idea of punctuality; and a reformation of Sabbath morning habits is no small argument for an early session. The scholar is to be pitied whose parents need this reform, for many evils are in the train of Sabbath morning indulgences. It will be safe and sufficiently respectful for the Superintendent to request that the children of such parents should be allowed their breakfast the night beforehand.

The Superintendent's voice should never be *raised above confusion*, in reading, talking, or giving orders, but the tone of confusion should be kept below his ordinary speaking pitch in the school room. After singing, the lesson of the day should be read, without any comment, by the Superintendent. The verses should be read alternately by the Superintendent, and teachers and scholars, stopping at the periods a sufficient time to secure entire harmony upon every word. A little practice will accomplish this.

The position of prayer is next to be assumed, and if deemed possible or expedient, it should be that of kneeling. But when this is not practicable, all should rise in their places. This should be a short and earnest

exercise, by whomsoever conducted; and all should be instructed mentally to join in it. A prayer that is long and circumlocutory is not appropriate, and will be apt to fail in Heaven and on earth. The school seated, the Superintendent should instantly see to it that every scholar in the room has a teacher. Classes over eighteen years of age may elect their own teacher, at their own request; and unless seen to be disorderly by the Superintendent, one of their own number may most profitably conduct an exercise, which it is safe to assume will be one of mutual instruction.

If any teachers are absent, the Superintendent should furnish the class by the appointment of an older pupil, from another class, and never associate classes together. This being done, the superintendent should note the attendance of teachers and scholars, in his roll-book. If in this review, new scholars are discovered, they should be *examined* and placed with a proper teacher. This introduction to the school of a new scholar is to be regarded as no trifle; for on its manner, the words of love there spoken, the interest then taken, hang eternal consequences. If there is a critical moment in life, this is it. If there is

an anxious moment in heaven, this is it. If one moment more busy than another to the tempter of souls, this may be the one. After the introduction, the scholar's name should be charged in the superintendent's roll-book to the teacher to whom he is assigned, placing the name and residence in the class-book; and the Secretary is then to record the name and number in the Receiving Book. The entries in these books may be of more consequence, and should be more accurately kept, than any merchant's ledger, though the entries in the latter should not be less than \$100,000.*

When the pupil leaves the school, he should have a letter of introduction to the Superintendent of some other school in his new locality. The time of the morning session should be unbroken by any call to order for public exercises, being supposed to be wanted by the teacher for his class. We say nothing here either of the substance or theory of teaching, that being an infinite science of itself. No one book could contain a table of contents. We may, however, in passing, suggest a few

* "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Mark, viii. 36.

books, which should be read, or reviewed if read before, on taking a seat before a class, which should ordinarily be composed of six pupils. These are *Watts on the Mind*; *Abercrombie on the Moral Feelings*; *End and Essence*, a little volume introductory to what is called the "*Gall System*," from the name of the author of a system of "Helps" for the study of the Scriptures and the Shorter Catechism, originally published in Scotland; *Harris's Pre-adamite Earth, Man Primeval, and The Family*; *Home Education*, by Isaac Taylor; *Finney's Lectures on Revivals*; *Newcomb's Young Lady's Guide*.

The general tone, or rather pitch of the sound in the school should not be so low as to be a murmur, nor so high as to be noisy. In this, the *molding room*, you are not to hear the clatter of the machine shop.

A signal for closing should precede the calling to order, by five minutes, that instruction may be suitably closed, entries made in class books of recitations, and books put in place. The superintendent calling to order, may announce what may refer to the next session, and such other matters as cannot be deferred to the afternoon session, when most of those

public exercises, winning, interesting, and appropriate, which go to make up the attractions of the school, will take place.

The closing exercises may be a hymn, with but one verse *read*. After singing, the school should be seated, and the classes rise and leave the school, orderly and in single file, as the superintendent clearly announces the teachers' names, in the order in which he wishes them to retire, the smaller classes ordinarily being first dismissed.

INFANT CLASS.

This world presents no object of interest, no concentration of treasure, like that infolded in the new-born babe. In this little coil are the germs of happiness and of woe, which are to bear an important relation to every object in God's universe, and increase or diminish the aggregate of its happiness or misery. These elements are to be waked into activities by touches a thousand fold more gentle than its own breath. The process of development begins before the eye has caught the first glimpse of sunlight, which is next in order of time to reveal to it the geometry of surrounding ob-

jects. Terrible as are the analogies that gleam on the future from this focal point of existence, "hope springing eternal" wings her eagle flight directly towards heaven, selects for it a mansion there, and begins the process of education. The first three or four years of our existence have more to do with our future destiny than any subsequent period of equal length; and the mother that makes a failure here can indulge but a trembling hope that our bungling arrangements can do any thing more than supply a remedy that is not absolutely hopeless. So much has been done, right or wrong, in the process of moral development, that, before the child of four years takes his seat in the infant school, discipline rather than education, antidote rather than development, become the theory of teaching. Assuming, as we may, perhaps must, that long before the child can lisp a syllable or frame a word, its moral character may be formed for eternity, how fearful is the responsibility of the mother! True to some of those moral elements of our being, not entirely lost in the fall of our first parents, it is manifest that repentance and sorrow, love and gratitude are yet among the first emotions that are to be

waked into action, even at this tender age. As soon as the child sins, it should repent; and hence we see in the very first exercise of the emotions, that the child is susceptible of repentance; and the first thought it is capable of receiving from the fond parent is, a disapprobation of wrong. Long before an idea can be evolved, this consciousness is well matured, and, it would seem that if this leading process were carefully watched and properly ministered to, the fearful consequences of neglect would not be so uniform and terribly disastrous. In passing from maternal education to that of the school room, we are met with a dearth of apparatus, entirely disproportionate to the importance of the object. Although it is in a world of hardships and adverse influences that a most important part of education is to be carried on, this constitutes no good ground for neglecting to do every thing we can to mitigate them.

Among the stronger arguments for the infant school is this: Since contact with the rough world is unavoidable, it is important that it commence early, that its first shocks may not be so severely felt as to sever the tender ties that constitute it a social being. But here, at

this point, is it not as important that the process be gradual as that it be early? We would, then, first, have young children associated with those nearly of their own age; second, supplied with the pleasantest room that can be provided, and the most convenient seats that can be constructed. It is but little less than barbarism to send the young children into a dark, damp room, seat them on benches that would tire the adult, if his feet could not reach the floor, and then expect happiness and attention. It is not within our design to suggest theories of instruction or of education, much less indicate any architectural accommodation; but so great is the deficiency here, that we cannot pass it by without one or two suggestions, in the anxious hope that a good work, covering the whole ground, on infant schools, will not much longer remain a desideratum in our Sabbath Schools.* For obvious reasons, the infant class should be separate from the rest of the school, although they should be present at its opening or closing exercises, if possible; variety of exercises, being the first thing to be named, in the training of the class. A gallery is the

* See "*Newcomb's Infant-School Question Book*," and "*Teacher's Aid*" (Massachusetts S. S. Society), as the best thing yet published.

best form in which they can be seated. This should be so graduated as to seat the largest scholars either nearest the front or nearest the back. If possible, this gallery should be constructed in a room so large as to afford opportunity of walking or marching around it; for in the course of an hour's confinement it is not only of the utmost importance that they should be made to rise and sit often, but also that they have some opportunity of walking orderly around the room. The singing cannot be too light, and sprightly lessons should be taught by narrative, illustrated by story, and sweetened and fostered in the memory, if possible, by singing a hymn descriptive of the lesson. There must be no reading before such a class, and all recitation should be oral, under the Lancasterian plan of repeating together. With this variety, properly intermingled, it is not necessary to introduce pantomime or genuflections for exercise. Here, as everywhere else, the object of the teacher should be to bring the tender feelings of the child into saving contact with revealed truth; and, next to that of the mother, this is a most hopeful, delicate, and responsible position. Here is wanted the gentlest spirit, the kindest soul, the wisest and

most loved and loving creature grace has ever elevated to any position this side heaven. But while this winning voice is here to sweetly sing the themes of redeeming love, a thousand times more tender than ever graceless poet fancied, it is still to be remembered that all these were sinners and in need of salvation long before they took their seat here. Of this, too, they are conscious. At a risk, let us offend the world rather than stifle a conviction here. The teacher of the infant class is to frown upon that growth of a most delicate and dangerous infidelity, that assumes what God has nowhere warranted, a salvation without repentance, or confidently penetrates where he has not shed a ray of light to guide us. There is but one song to be sung in heaven. If a miracle of mercy redeems alike the infant of Christendom and heathenism, this is not revealed, and therefore is no ground of procedure, nor yet of consolation. Vague and unintelligent, indiscriminate and sickly shadows are suffered here to float through the chambers of the mind, and have already done much to smother convictions and paralyze the efforts that should be immediately energized, else this infant infidelity will speedily become the gigantic parent of

a general skepticism, omnipotent for evil. Far short of these shadowy precincts, the character of God furnishes abundant ground of consolation to every heart prepared to rest its hopes upon the attributes of God, just as he has seen fit to reveal himself in word, in works, in ways. Let, then, the wings of your dove-like tenderness brood over these little ones; but consider them not safe until they are sheltered in the arms of that Saviour who once so tenderly blessed them,* and held them up, not as models of perfection, but as possessing the teachable spirit which should most effectually rebuke the pride, arrogance, and self-conceit, that rendered reformation hopeless.

SECTION III.—AFTERNOON.

Mission or Union Schools.

As we are indicating a theory for general use, where circumstances are such that the spirit only can be complied with, we may now and then suggest particular modes for schools

* Mark x. 16: *i e.*, Invoked upon them the blessing of God, or “gave them the assurance of his favor as the Messiah.”—*Barnes*.

disconnected with congregations or churches. These are generally called "Union," or "Mission" Schools (gladly we hail their advent), now coming into so general use. The ordinary routine and principles apply alike to all Sabbath Schools (for all are to be regarded as associations for similar purposes, to insure the teaching of the Bible); but those scholars and adults who compose these assemblies, it will at once be perceived, sustain different relations out of the school room. The teachers in such schools have generally their own church relations outside and separate from the school, and where their classes are not always expected to accompany them. This, however, should be the case, as far as practicable; for although all gathered into these schools are not able to understand the lesson or sermon so profitable to him, yet the great congregation will make some impression, and the worship of God here do much to help make up the habit and outward life of the individual. Care should be taken, however, that this service, necessarily so general, is not allowed to chill their attachment to the local school, so much better adapted to awaken new desires, and feed the flame already kindled in their hearts. It may, there-

fore, be often best and proper to form in these schools, local churches, a long time before it would be best to impose any such expenses upon such an organization as the support of a pastor. The one will only cost to the Christian community \$150 to \$250 a year, while no pastor could be supported in a city short of \$1,500 to \$2,000. The ordinances of the Gospel may be there enjoyed by a few teachers and two or three or more converts; and great will be the pleasure with which some suitable person will be found to administer them. Here again, as these places are supposed to be the birthplaces of souls, many will feel an attachment which it will be most dangerous to transfer. Still, these new-born infants must not be thrown into a snow-drift, under a perversion of the doctrine of saints' perseverance, and be told tauntingly that, if they are alive they will live. But before these organizations may be deemed by their judicious friends expedient, as many as can should be induced to accompany their teachers to the church, and be favorably associated for hearing the more general announcement of God's truth, and not be left to lose their impressions, by transitions so great as attend them in the street, or at many of

their homes. It is, moreover, desirable that some of these new converts in mission schools, if willing to follow their teachers to such churches as they attend, should find there some besides the teachers who will associate with them, and lead them along into a communion that shall do them good. Perhaps the day may not be far distant, when the feeding of such lambs may constitute a care of the church session, consistory, committee, or office-men of the church.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

If to the morning session you brought that bodily vigor and mental elasticity, which made intense application a mutual pleasure and profit to all in the class, there is yet an easier but not less important element to be developed in the exercises of the afternoon session.

The science of Christian activity is now and then alluded to by way of embellishing a hortatory sentence; but it has not yet begun to be studied or understood. Nowhere is there to be found a professorship on the *book of the Acts*; and yet, who will pretend that, without it, the book of Romans could be any thing

more to the world at large than the deductions of Plato? Although it must be admitted that *Romans* would produce *Acts*. We have so magnified and distorted the science of forms, the effects of art, the lucubrations of wit and genius, that we find no difficulty in getting 5,000 hearers to an hour's exhibition; but tell them where they could see a soul weeping for sin—the *Spirit accomplishing the work*—and they would all go home. Over the one scene angels would be hanging with intense anxiety; and when they discerned, through tears of penitence, the rainbow of hope, swiftly bear the joyful tidings to waiting hosts on high! Man, sympathizing man, made through grace the living minister to his fellow man; delivered, as he claims to be, from the awful doom of an eternal hell; destined to an inheritance that will grow pleasurable just in proportion as it is possessed in common with others, whom his faithfulness has won thither,—this man will exhaust his powers in the invention of ingenious excuses for justifying his absence from the Sabbath School, the prayer meeting, and the personal interview with his fellow man! So common is the scene, where pre-eminent talents are to be found in a minister, that a

full church and an empty prayer meeting are no felt inconsistency ; and yet, the question of cause and effect, in practical working here, is not made a department of study in the schools of theology. Does some one say, "If I could see the process, just as I see a drop of crimson liquid color a vial of water, I would go and witness it"? But, if it is but a mere curiosity, you would go but once ; yet you do see effects just as obvious. Were the effects of the golden drops of truth, that may fall from your lips upon the yielding heart of the pupil, visible to your natural eye, they could not so much interest an intelligent Christian as the transformations that grace makes manifest in the lives of men. Here, as everywhere else, God has furnished not only the best kind, but the right kind of evidence, in order to stimulate the emotions, and secure the desired result.

This afternoon session is pre-eminently fitted to bring before the minds of teachers and scholars those objects which are to be obtained only by the adoption of such means and measures as are calculated to supply this appalling desideratum in the church universal.

Allowing an hour and a half or more in cities and villages for the intermission, a school

may generally be assembled at half-past one in the afternoon; and when the church service commences at three o'clock, the ordinary session of an hour and a quarter may be conveniently held.

Order restored the school should be opened with singing;* after which the verses comprising the lesson for the next Sabbath should be read, alternately by the Superintendent and teachers and scholars, teachers joining in a clear and distinct voice with the scholars. The time which it is expected the teachers will have with the scholars, should be distinctly announced by the Superintendent, and should not be ordinarily over fifteen to twenty minutes, according to the number of public exercises which the Superintendent foresees are to take place. In seasons of special revival, nearly the whole time should be given to the teacher with his class; and pressing indeed should be the case that is allowed to interrupt this hallowed communion of teacher and scholar. If in one or more classes there is this demand for a change, the spirit may be made contagious and

* See Chap. x.

generally diffused, by having only a few public exercises, and those of a decidedly devotional character. But if there is nothing to call for special variation, time may be then appropriated to public exercises. These should always be of a lively and interesting character. The school will be most relieved by rising and singing a hymn; and, after being seated, this exercise may be profitably continued, if nothing else is pressing, for five or ten minutes. If there is an address to be made, missionary business to be attended to, temperance meetings to be noticed or held, workings of co-operative outside committees to be attended to, books in the library to be noticed, funds to be raised, strangers to be introduced, now occurs a proper time to attend to them.

This is the proper time, also, to announce the numbers in attendance, of both teachers and scholars, both morning and afternoon, with the additions and dismissals, and also the number of verses of Scripture recited. Or, if it is not thought proper to repeat this as often as every Sabbath, it may be for the interest of the school at large to know the aggregate of Scripture recitations as often

as once a month. Cases of public rebuke or discipline, where all private admonition has failed, may be sometimes called for. Rewards, which should generally extend no further than to conduct which has been under the eye of the teacher, may be here attended to; and they should be at the expense of the individual teacher. This is all that will give them value, and all general systems of reward are apt to generate such frauds as to do more hurt than good.

The Superintendent should see to it that all the female teachers are provided with suitable company to secure attendance at the next Teachers' Meeting. That man should be regarded as no inconsiderable friend of the school, who will see that his daughter is without reasons of this kind for not being able to attend regularly. Male teachers may frequently call for such as are nearest them, and thus all shall be sure to be there. Neither the Teachers' Meeting nor any session of the school should close, until the Superintendent has made all the arrangements he can, to secure the success of the next session. If either is dismissed without regard to this, and in a hurried, careless, heedless way, the

next session will disappoint his hopes. These arrangements becomingly made, and the Teachers' Meeting distinctly appointed, he can hardly fail to secure a general attendance.

Sometimes indifference to religion is not only respected but fostered, by the reckless dismissal of a meeting just at the moment it has become interesting. What Board of Bank Directors would be justified by the Stockholders in adjourning while a question was under consideration that might increase the stock ten per cent.? And yet, doubtless, all meetings should be seasonably dismissed; and they may generally be within an hour and a quarter.

These miscellaneous services may be of great value, or they may dissipate the religious character of the school so much as to produce irreparable injury. The regulation of these will require all the wisdom of the Superintendent, and sometimes he may feel obliged to ask counsel at the teachers' meeting, how many should be introduced. Five minutes should be allowed after the first signal for closing, before the school is called to order, in which every entry should be made, and every book and paper put in its proper

place for the week. Then the Superintendent should publicly question the school on the lesson for the day. This exercise may be the most interesting of the day, or it may totally fail for want of study, skill, and persevering effort on the part of the Superintendent. *First*, he must be so familiar with the lesson as to be able to ask questions on any part of it, without the aid of any book. If a book is used, the interest must flag. Few have been the schools that have greatly profited by the regular introduction of this exercise; and yet it may be made very profitable. *Second*, the questions should be so simple and the answers so obvious, that every scholar who reads can answer. Harder or special questions may be put to particular classes, and even to individuals, but only occasionally. The questions should be short, answers shorter, and made upon the instant. The one should follow the other as quick as the weaver's shuttle. If the Superintendent wishes to make any explanations, or urge home any practical inferences, he should not interrupt the process to do so, for he will lose that sprightly vivacious thinking now wanted; but he may do so most profitably as a general conclusion.

The school may be closed by asking the Divine blessing upon the instructions and labors of the day and nothing else. A scattered senseless prayer, made in conformity to a certain pitch and form and time, must be, in the sight of Heaven, a most loathsome exhibition of our spiritual stupidity. All prayer should have a corresponding action or willingness to learn or do the divine pleasure; or it is mockery.* Prayer for divine blessings with no desire for them; for a conversion, with no love for the soul; for revivals, with no readiness and preparation to give the necessary time and do the necessary labor of talking to lost souls, is but an insult to the Majesty on high. If we want no other blessings than what we have, let us be silent and thankful. If there are other blessings, which we are so sinful as not to feel the need of,† our first and perhaps our only petition should be, that God would make us see and feel our nakedness and poverty, or the loveliness of Divine things. Let the voice *follow*, not attempt to *lead* the desires.

* "Be not deceived, God is not mocked." 1 Cor. vi. 9.

† Rev., iii. 17: "Because thou sayest I am rich," &c.

It is the peculiar excellence of the Sabbath School, that labor and prayer, subjects and objects, are so commingled that it requires but little effort to keep alive sensibilities that are so often repressed and repelled from the aimless prayer meeting, whose only object appears to be a self-perpetuation, or at most a vague idea of spiritual growth, on principles that would subvert the whole theory of God's moral government.*

REFLECTIONS ON LEAVING THE SCHOOL ROOM.

If few are entitled to the reputation of always keeping faith with their fellow-men, far less is the number who have actually kept faith with themselves. It cannot be pretended that we are naturally predisposed to self-libel; and yet who can say that his own life has not been made up of self-deception? If three fourths of the souls in perdition were now asked why they came to be there, it would be answered, that broken resolutions and pro-

* Israel did not receive blessings, because they sought for selfish ends, and not for the glory of God,—Hosea, x. 1. “Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss,”—James, iv. 3.

crastination were the causes. So successfully has the adversary preached this self-delusion, that we are sometimes inclined to think it would be wise to revise all our forms of procedure in religious meetings, and only direct our attention to the manner in which we have performed felt duties and obligations, rather than in laying plans for their future accomplishment. As we return from the teacher's meeting, the sanctuary, or the prayer meeting, we might well introduce a searching introspection as to the manner in which we have improved the opportunity of the past hour. But never can there fall upon the human heart such ponderous questions as will follow the Teacher from the Sabbath School. Quicker than the lightning's flash will his imagination glance at the future; but if he would be faithful to himself and his pupil, let him searchingly and frequently glance at the past, and ask himself whether he really succeeded in this or that effort; or if not, let him seek to know the cause of failure.

The questions might run thus: Have I succeeded; and why not? Did I teach as I had intended? Was I suitably awake to every truth I uttered? Was it accompanied with so

much feeling and prayer, that my scholars saw that I was in earnest, and believed what I said? Did my words fall like a hammer upon that sin-cased heart? Have I evidence to believe that the word of God, by my faithfulness, did break it in pieces and shatter its false hopes and refuges of lies? Were my affections so much enlisted that every word was constrained by love? And was this the instrument by which I endeavored to secure every result? Was this feeling so intense as to agonize me in prayer for this or that one, while I was addressing the truth to the understanding? Did the indifference of my own heart exhibit a hypocrisy so obviously seen by the scholars, that I felt its rebound upon my own heart? Was the inconsistency so great that I wanted to get away from the class? Am I conscious that I have so taught them to-day that they cannot but believe? Or have I so unfaithfully taught them that I know they would not believe, if it depended in any sense upon the manner in which they have been taught? Did I fully realize that God meant what he said, when he declared he was more ready to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him than earthly parents are to give good gifts unto their children?

Was my mind paralyzed by the cloudy, vague, indefinite, yet pernicious error, that, if I so do my duty as to be sure of God's blessing, I shall rob him of his glory, and exalt my own filthy rags; thus making my humility and piety consist in what God will adjudge to be a guilty unbelief and refusal to do my duty? Strip off the deceitful *visor* from my heart, and show to myself and my God that I should have this day secured the salvation of these scholars, had my heart been fixed upon it. Have I abused and perverted the truth of God, and am I now trying to throw the cause of the failure upon the Spirit of God and the obstinacy of those whom I have endeavored to teach? Have I taught in the exercise of a belief that I might succeed to-day? That nothing stood in the way but what I was responsible for? And so am I now ready to adjudge myself, and thus relieve these pupils and God from the imputation of my guilt? Once more: Am I prepared to go to the judgment upon the issue of this day's stewardship? Have I done what I could? And when I see them retire from the tribunal of the Judge, under the curse of "Depart ye," and take their gloomy way to the prison-house of eternal death, could I say that I was not

involved in that last look of despair? As he passed by me and recognized me as his Sabbath School teacher, did I seem to hear him say, "Aye, you did not *so* teach me, you did not *so* love me, you did not *so* warn me, you did not *so* live before me, you did not *so* pray for and labor with me." And was I ready to sink and shrink under the accusation, as I saw him retiring to deeper and yet deeper shades of endless ruin?

Teacher, unless you are faithful, this scene is no picture of the imagination. The reality is just before you. A week, a day, an hour, may lift the curtain.

AN AFTERNOON PRAYER-MEETING.

It may be sometimes desirable to succeed an afternoon session by a prayer-meeting. In schools disconnected with pastoral teaching or congregations, it is often best to adopt one permanently, to which special effort should be made to bring the parents of the scholars. One such, established two or three years ago, has enjoyed a continual presence of the Spirit, so that the teachers employed all know who should look after and gather up the fruits,

which have been formed into a church of sixty or seventy members, mostly converts in connection with these instrumentalities. We quote the fact simply to present some of the characteristics of this afternoon prayer-meeting:

1. It is called to order ten or at most fifteen minutes after the school is dismissed, and is conducted by the teachers, one of whom is chairman, always appointing his successor for the next Sabbath.

2. Opened by singing and prayer; five to ten verses of Scripture are then read, presenting a single subject deemed most appropriate to the occasion.

3. Another prayer; and one verse, familiar to all, sung by some one competent to lead the tune, without being called for by the chair.

4. Opportunity is given for remarks, which is instantly improved, before the meeting is chilled and killed by a pause. If no one is ready to speak, a prayer is volunteered, and often several, by which time many are ready to speak a word from observation or experience.

5. The meeting is here uniformly interrupted by a suspension of the ordinary exercises of a

prayer-meeting, for ten minutes, and an opportunity given for every Christian in the room to converse with the impenitent on the subject of immediate submission to the terms of salvation, with which the teaching has made him familiar. This exercise, cheerfully, promptly embraced, has been the secret of success, in securing repentance, pardon, and peace, through the gift of the Holy Ghost; nor could such breaks in prayer-meetings often fail to exclude profitless formality, though the intercourse should be only among Christians on personal experience. Nothing is easier than to keep such intercourse within the rules of order; nothing harder than to subordinate taste, habit, and formalism to godliness and real sympathy for a soul exposed to an endless eternity of fire unquenchable.*

6. After one verse volunteered, like, "To-day the Saviour calls," "O turn ye, O turn ye," two or three minutes are offered for exhortation, when those especially desiring the prayers of Christians are allowed to express it by rising. They are then prayed for by some one called upon by the chair.

* "Their worm dieth not," &c.—Mark, ix. 44.

7. One or two minutes are now appropriated to silent prayer, which is often attended by an *audible silence*, indicating the gracious presence of the Holy Ghost.

8. The meeting should be hastened, though never violently precipitated, to a close.

We have room left but for a single proof of the utility of this method of conducting the prayer meeting. At a meeting of the committee for the examination of candidates for admission to the church, an elderly woman gave this as her experience: She had lived a number of years in Philadelphia, also in Buffalo, and in Brooklyn, and in Christian families, but was never spoken to on the subject of her personal hope of salvation, until addressed by a stranger's voice, in the intermission of this meeting.

SECTION IV.—*Suspension of Schools.*

Having already hinted at the disastrous consequence of the summer suspension of our city schools, we recur to it again only to say that this periodicity is alike fatal to all the interests of religion. In our own healthful climate, truly, we may not feel compelled to

ask pardon for suggesting that Christians should stop to ask the question whether their absence is to leave interests to suffer, far more dear to a loving heart, than the physical and pecuniary, which we so frequently suffer to outweigh the moral. Substitutes might be thought of. A little sooner or a little later might be suffered to enter into the calculation. Arrangements might be made that teacher and scholars should be absent at the same time. In some cases, one or two scholars who could not go, might be entrusted to the care of a friend who should be made acquainted with this or that susceptibility to temptation, this or that peculiarity, idiosyncrasy, &c., which have been observed to be the weak points where temptation is most apt to seduce and ruin. Thus the youth may be saved, who is, in a most important sense, committed to your guardian care and moral training. But on no account should the sessions of any school be entirely suspended. A very considerable portion of scholars and teachers will always be left at home; and never should these be turned out to roam like sheep upon the unfenced mountains. Beasts of prey, dogs of temptation, serpents of seduction, are lying thick and

watchful along every step of youth ; and now is the enticement offered to the fatal snare. Who can incur the fearful responsibility of voting that one Sabbath School shall be suspended for one, two, or three months ?

In nine cases out of ten, a Sabbath School will be found to lose many of its scholars by the vacation, who will never return to the school ; and after the time of re-assembling, many weeks will be spent in fruitless effort to bring the school back to its maximum ratio of attendance. The summer vacation and the storms of winter, will make such continual interruption in such a school, that few satisfactory sessions will be had in the year, when there will be such attendance as shall allow any reasonable ground to hope for results. Superintendents and teachers, who are struggling amid such confusion and discouragements, are indeed to be pitied, and none the less, because these are self-inflictions. They can have but little pleasure in gathering fruits of a labor that must be all toil and trouble.

Equally is it to be regretted, that, in some parts of the country, where the district school is only held in the winter, the Sabbath School is suspended on account of the bad roads, in-

clemency of the weather, &c. It would seem that the Sabbath school is to be constantly and faithfully continued only where human ingenuity cannot invent any apology for its intermission. The whole operations of those Sabbath School Unions, which are being carried on in the more sparse settlements of our country, are not only rendered artificial and senseless, but the entire system belittled and brought into contempt, as a small affair, in the estimation of the people, by being held only part of the year, and suspended just when the avocations of life afford every inducement for their continuance.

If in every school house, there should be a Sabbath School, where church facilities do not supersede their use, with what consistency can the Sabbath School be suspended, and the district school continued? Will not our friends, the contributors to our noble Society, come to the conclusion that these periodical suspensions imply that the system is not worth supporting, except where wind and weather favor. The system is one that ought to gather strength just in proportion to the forces that are opposed to it, whether they be physical or moral.

CHAPTER VI.

CONCERTS.

THE promiscuous gatherings into primary assemblies, on a common level and a common platform, is as much the palladium of religious as of civil liberty. The history of the race, the world over, has demonstrated that wherever the former exists, the latter will follow as a natural consequence. No nation, therefore, need be in bondage to its spiritual or civil oppressor. Not a despotism on earth now sits so firmly upon the shoulders of its mercenary soldiers, but the power of free conversation, which cannot be restrained, would overturn it, if the subjects of it patiently and perseveringly exercised their birth-right in educating each other by the free interchange of sentiment. Truth evolved in the family and neighborhood, is a power which the executioner, whether civil or military, can only arrest long after a people

have tamely surrendered their rights as creatures of God. Rome, conscious of this, and to prevent it, has established her confessional, but that is powerless if the people will it. With equal certainty may it be said that there is no other power that can subvert standing armies and thrones, and give the dignity and the destiny that Heaven designed for man. Not gunpowder, but the Bible and the spelling-book are to enfranchise the tribes of humanity. The spelling-book without the Bible will make them seething cauldrons—with it, peaceful, nay blissful communities. The people alone are to say, not only who shall restrain them, but wherein they will restrain themselves. This is a fundamental principle in all correct government. The steady adherence to it will bring speedy revolutions that shall continue increasingly permanent. The danger is not that potentates fix their eagle eye on this only source of their overthrow; for the constant talking for which we plead shall ere long be heard and welcomed in palace halls. The danger is, that you, Christian man or Christian woman, will not come to the prayer meeting. The greater danger still is, that the few who do come will

vacate their seat when the "business of the assembly" is to be transacted. This little business forms precedents; shows the right and the wrong; and teaches by inference and influence. These, Christian mothers, it is more important for you to hear, understand, and teach your children, than any lessons that fall from the lips of statesmen, sages, or philosophers.* With what a contemptuous air do you often hear it said, "It is only a difference in *Church Government*;" yet this is the mightiest difference in the world. Nothing but what relates to the immediate salvation of the human soul exceeds it in importance, for in its wake does the state follow. That Roman Catholic power, which,

* See p. 79, on voting in Teachers' Meetings. Note also, a New England Town Meeting. To show the importance of retaining and exercising these simple forms, we refer to the following fact in the early history of our country: It is alleged that, near the residence of Mr. Jefferson, in Virginia, there was a church governed on Congregational principles whose meetings he frequently attended, and that he then remarked, "that he had concluded that it would be the best form of government for the American Colonies." If these simple proceedings could produce such an impression upon the author of the Declaration of Independence, surely their influence upon those who are to be the future statesmen, legislators, and administrators of the laws of our country is not to be despised or ignored. See "*Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*," page 405, note.

more effectually than all the combined forces of the prince of darkness, in forms of paganism and idolatry opposes the spread of the Gospel, is simply *a power of Church Government*. The difference between the United States and Tuscany is more a difference of church government than of civil government. The soul, the mind, must be free before there can be freedom of the body. Slavery, if not a necessary, is a uniform consequence of religious restraints. So strong is man even in his ruins, that you can only bind him by binding his soul, his moral being; and you cannot loose him safely, nay, you cannot loose him at all, but by cutting this fetter. All religious meetings and congregations should, moreover, have this element in them, without which they will miss their end. Here, the only method of inward culture is outward expression. Shut your graces from the sunlight of the outward world, and they will die more certainly than the mere plant of nature. The attempt to create a piety within you by the contemplation of the subject of it without the object, would more certainly fail than the man who would attempt to establish a good reputation by merely proclaiming one. If you were to succeed in

becoming holy, by any amount of your devotions, you would subvert God's theory of blessing charity, and ask to be blessed for a patent of your own, that would charge Heaven with unskillful invention.* Neither the amount nor the tone of your piety depends so much upon the number of sermons you hear, prayers rehearsed, chapters read, as upon the *how you improve them*. If they fail to lift your desires above to the glory of God, they fail of their end. If they fail to guide your steps and your sympathy in the way your Saviour went,† they are the occasion of a two-fold loss; first, by preventing your own *real* growth in grace by a *fancied* one; and second, by robbing the world of its right to you as a Christian.‡ We press the invitation to the prayer meeting, then, from these two elevated positions: *First*, that you may see from this most favorable stand-point the world around demanding your sympathies; and *second*, that here you may have a test of the genuineness of

* See "*Man Primeval*," page 359.

† "Jesus went about doing good"—Acts, x. 38.

‡ 1 Cor. ix. 16: "Wo is me if I preach not the Gospel."

your love,* thus obtaining knowledge and grace to do your duty.

We may also add that, when prayer-meetings are objectless, aimless, and the design of them mistaken or lost sight of, they become Christless, lifeless, possibly for the time being as bad as none, although not even for all this to be abandoned. All life invariably has and must have an organic form. Without this, the spirit will want an instrumentality. As Adam became a body before the living spirit was breathed into him, so pray ye that the dead body may become the temple of the Holy Ghost.

The Sabbath-school system, while it affords facilities for covering the whole field of objective or co-operative Christianity, infringes upon no present church organizations. It even theoretically includes them all. It supplies the feet and hands, without which the body could not work. It provides the implements for dropping the seed, cultivating the soil, and nourishing the plant, until the harvest. Nor is

* 1 John iii. 17: "He that seeth his brother have need, &c., how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

it possible that this can be thoroughly and systematically done, without a proper distribution through the month of those meetings, whose objects are so distinct as not to be united into one without great damage to each and confusion to all.

If we would avoid this, we must not do violence to either, by forcing it from its natural place and relation. But for some recent signs of the times, we should feel justified in anticipating an early day when each week should have its Concert in the following order:

1. The Monthly Concert of Prayer for Foreign Missions, as it is now held in the churches.

2. The Monthly Concert of Prayer, for parents, teachers, and scholars.

3. The Union Concert of Prayer, in which Christians of all denominations should unite; thus giving to each other the advantages of denominational differences, and co-working for the entire occupancy of the ground over which they undertake to extend their joint labors.

4. The Concert of the separate Sabbath Schools, in which all are periodically educated in the best methods of extending the system over our own country.

These Concerts have all been in active oper-

ation for some years past, and have done much towards educating the people, and arousing aggressive Christian effort. As just now intimated, we cannot repress the regret that much has been lost, first, by some of our churches taking Sabbath evening, instead of Monday evening, for these meetings; in other instances, uniting Foreign and Home Missions in the same meeting.

While it is true that, for the present moment a much better attendance may be secured by holding a Concert of prayer on Sabbath evening, and probably more information diffused and money raised, yet in the end it may be found that this practice is a concession to that worldliness which would limit all religion, and pretty much all piety to the Sabbath. The education of half a dozen Christians, in a spirit directly opposed to this, whose spiritual forces shall be felt through all the ramifications of life, would be worth more in the end to Christianity than a full Sabbath evening prayer-meeting, or its larger contributions. Some one has well compared this kind of action to the swift gliding of a ship on an upper current of the ocean, while the iceberg, sinking deep, takes hold of the under current, and moving

steadily in the contrary direction meets and dashes in pieces the ill-fated bark. The only strength to be relied on is a constitutional one, that rejects from her sanitary requirements all expedients that only affect the symptoms and leave the disease untouched. It is always easy to relinquish a moral position ; but such are the proclivities of our nature that a hard struggle only will regain it. It may be a long time before all our Concerts will find their proper place, during the week ; and therefore we prescribe for them as they are, with only the hope that they will neither be commingled nor given up, but conducted on plans of usefulness that shall make every day of the week redolent with spicy breezes that catch their fragrance amid the trees that grow on the banks of the river on high.*

MONTHLY CONCERT FOR PARENTS, TEACHERS,
AND SCHOLARS.

There should be a meeting composed of all who sustain any relation to a particular school.

* See Revelations, ch. xxii.

At the moment the hour arrives, the exercises may commence by singing, and a short extempore prayer, limited to the blessings required for this meeting. With the greatest economy of time, any information which this meeting may require should now be given. It may here be proper for the secretary or superintendent, if deemed desirable, to communicate any facts of general interest in regard to the school, such as numbers in attendance on each Sabbath, or by average of the month; amount of Scripture recited; items of religious interest; number of admissions and dismissions, and sometimes the reasons for dismissal; the wants of the school, and how moneys may have been expended. Any one should feel at liberty to call for information. These preliminary exercises should not occupy more than five or ten minutes, unless it should be thought proper by the pastor, or some other suitable person, to question the school on the lessons for the month, or to hear some recitations; which may occupy ten minutes or more. By this time, certainly, the meeting should have passed into a more spiritual frame. At this point the conductor may read from five to ten verses of Scripture, relating to but one subject, which it is his design to

bring before the meeting. Nothing, however, should prevent the spontaneous utterance of any one present; but the chairman should see to it that the meeting be constantly drifting to some point not yet attained, and be ready to change direction as often as circumstances may require. Singing should interrupt the speaking only when it will intensify the feelings; and more than one or two verses will be apt rather to dissipate than increase it. Opportunity for remarks should be immediately improved. The want of thought and of interest, which is the guilty cause of chilling pauses, instead of being distributed, should be self-appropriated by every one; and instead of making a virtue of self-reproach, we should execute the resolve at once to show amendment. The pious, excuseless lawyer and doctor, we may hope are here, ready with their best suggestions, even though any supposable impossibility may have kept them from the teacher's chair in the Sabbath School. The absence of that technical use of language, which religious teachers so often adopt, makes the remarks of all outside Christians, if there be any such, doubly acceptable and profitable. Here there should be plain dealing. In the last half hour

of this meeting, the interest should be too deep for anecdote and rhetoric. The gossamer of refinement and civilization should be taken off the human heart, and it should be looked at through the medium of divine truth. "Ye must be born again," is the theme. That proud eye you once more cast at the cross of Christ, must be rebuked, humbled, and bathed in the tears of repentance. The hurtling thunder—the swift approach of the day of judgment—now no distant repercussion—from heart to heart, from conscience to conscience, runs the felt power of a present condemnation. Every one should feel here, and be made to realize the danger of ministering just enough of the realities of the future world to familiarize and indurate the feelings. Like affliction upon the incorrigible sinner, like punishment upon the unsubdued child, vague and slight repentance may here increase the hatred to justice and holiness, and render the future hopeless. The nature and consequences of sin should be so vividly held before the mind that all must see and feel its hatefulness. Immediate and entire surrender is the only condition of hope. There is, there can be no assembly on earth if not this, in which the immediate results are felt to be eter-

nal loss or eternal gain. If it is a hopeful hour, it is a yet more terrible one. Its issues are eternal. They may be everlasting peace. They may be everlasting pain. And which it shall be, reader, may depend upon the part you take there. If the teacher has failed to arouse the pupil, now may be the only time you will have to do it. If he has carelessly inculcated error, the general tone of this meeting may do much to neutralize its effects. If he has not so taught as to expect conversion, let not this meeting indorse the fatal hallucination. Has he labored under the mistaken notion that if he but sows the seed when the ground has become beaten and hardened by sin, it may better take root and grow?—let this delusion now be dissipated. When the habits shall crust and shut the heart against religious impressions, will it then be as hopeful as it is now? How commonly does the religious teacher find himself indulging the impression that he must work away without results, and trust to some earthquake, some extraordinary coincidences of Providence, or the gracious winds of a revival that may never blow upon him, to wake him up, and waft him against a will made obdurate by the lapse of years, into the kingdom of

heaven! Now is the time for a heavenly breeze, to blow away such sinful chaff. Once more—has the teacher of your children been reciting anecdote, teaching the geography of the Holy Land, the manners and customs of the Jews (things in themselves proper), when he should have been seeking submission to the terms of salvation? Now is the hour of reparation and recovery. The seed that he expected should lie buried long, you, Christian parent or friend, must here cause to swell and show signs of life before the vital germ shall expire in the induration of habit or in the intoxication of pleasure.

These meetings, though not to be violently closed, should not be protracted as long as the interest may continue, but be followed in the families by setting apart at least half an hour for private retirement and meditation.

MONTHLY CONCERT.

Although this meeting has no immediate connection with the Sabbath School, our apology for alluding to it here is merely to assign it a place, so as not, either in time or

matter, to interfere with that appropriated to either of the other three Concerts.

The meeting is usually conducted by the Pastor of the church, and relates wholly to the operations of organic Christianity in foreign lands. With this allusion, we dismiss it with the suggestion that it should be so conducted as to bring our sympathies into contact with the misery and degradation of the heathen world. The best method of doing this known to the writer is, to assign the various localities to different individuals, one or more, with the understanding that they shall direct their reading and inquiries to the field appropriated to them, and report verbally at the Concert the history, condition, and prospects of missionary operations there. This method will secure a general reading of missionary intelligence, and lead to an acquaintance with the geography and history of the countries where missions exist; thus bringing frequently in review the whole field. This will more than compensate for any other losses, by the reflex advantages gained by breaking up the dumb habits of those whose chief theme of conversation should be Christ and his kingdom.

CHILDREN'S CONCERT.

In almost all vigorous schools, it has long been a custom to set apart a day in the week, or the afternoon of some Sabbath, omitting often the regular routine of the day, for the purpose of holding before the minds of the youth the moral wants of other children, either in our own or foreign countries. The arguments for this Concert are, (1) formation of correct habits of giving at the right time of life; (2) exercising sympathies peculiar to youth, before benumbed by selfishness; (3) systematic co-operation, by which moral enterprises are to be carried forward. The custom has prevailed, to a very great extent, of applying the funds collected at these Concerts for the support of a missionary in the Southern or Western States, whose labors are directed by the American Sunday School Union, but who is to correspond directly with the school from which he draws his support. They may and they should select any one they please, to whom the American Sunday School Union will give a commission and assign a field; for if personally known to the contributors, the

interest in the work will be greatly intensified. This missionary should write to the association which supports him, monthly. His letters will not only keep alive the interest, but the information they contain of such matters as the children ought to know, will more than compensate for the money contributed, to say nothing of the direct influence of the missionary. This method erects no screen that hides the real condition of the population with whom you would sympathize, and subjects all missionary operations to the gaze, in open day, of the public eye; for the whole method of conducting missions is a miscellaneous adaptation of means to ends, in such a complex variety as to require the general observation and charitable criticism of all who are sufficiently interested to contribute to their support.

No sooner does the missionary invite two or more neighbors (of different denominational creeds, perhaps) to sit down together in the frontier settlement, to study and teach the word of God, than they feel their own great need of a teacher. Their first effort will be to get one. It is within the truth to say that a very large proportion of the churches organ-

ized at the present day, commence in these Sabbath school formations. They as naturally call for the pastoral teacher, as the student for the tutor, in any relation of life. They also as naturally result in a church organization as the bud produces the flower. Let it, however, still be remembered that these primary organizations are strictly Scriptural institutions, to do a work which no other form of organization can do so well. What home missionary agency can compare with this?

Returning from this digression, we have still to premise, before setting in order the conduct of this meeting,* that many things often occur to distract the attention and divide the proceeds of these little collections. Notwithstanding the general and growing popularity of the Sunday school system, there is yet, and will be for a long time to come, an impression that the agency is so cheap that it does not require much money. Hence collections for these objects are generally much below those taken up for almost any other general society. The vastness and extent of the work once properly conceived, and there will be no lack of

* See chap ix., on *Organizing*.

means for such a labor; nor will we here admit the fact that we suffer much for want of funds. This is too mean a thing for us to ask of Christians,—the meanest they can give to the cause of Christ. What we ask, nay, what we demand in their and our Master's name, is not *money* but *themselves*.

Meager as are the contributions to the Sunday school cause, the income from these little associations constitutes no inconsiderable part of it. Our friends in other societies, will therefore forgive us for taking the ground that the money contributed in these monthly collections should be held sacredly appropriated for the benefit of the institution in which it is contributed. It will be far from the wishes of Sabbath School laborers, we doubt not, to put their hands into the charity box of these institutions, nor is it desirable that the funds contributed in one department should be indiscriminately scattered through various others. Much will be gained by keeping them distinct. Let the children, and others interested, know and feel that the money collected by them is to diffuse the blessings which they enjoy, and which we here appreciate by the offerings we make to give it to others. It is hoped, for

these reasons, and many others, that these contributions will be appropriated for the extension of the institution which has called for their consecration. As in these meetings it may not be improper to advert to the operations of other societies (as they in like manner may often, to the operations of the Sunday School), yet the main object should be kept in view, namely, the universal extension of the system.

The meeting should always be conducted by its youthful president, and begun promptly at the time appointed, by singing and prayer. Pray again, and read a few verses of Scripture, generally from the book of Acts; and then the reading of the letter from the missionary; one verse sung, opportunity may be given for addresses, or remarks, or information, which will always be more acceptable from the members than from help brought in. This will develop talent, and make a more abiding impression, although there is no meeting in which special agents and gifted Sabbath School friends delight more to exercise their gifts and graces than in this. Speeches, seldom too long if *good enough*, must here be of a peculiar character, and interspersed with apt illustration, which

should be *facts*, not fictions, nor often hypotheses. The only point to be guarded here, is the lengthening of these gatherings inappropriately, for they would never become tedious; and yet, not like some others, they should be limited to an hour and a half, especially as they are generally composed chiefly of youth.

UNION CONCERT.

As co-operative unions, composed of individuals belonging to various denominations, involve the "*union principle in Christianity*," we here bestow upon it a moment's consideration. Man presents the same variety of shades and phases in his moral, as in his physical and mental manifestations. He is in strict analogy, here, with all the works of God, as exhibited in organic or inorganic matter, animate or inanimate nature. These eternized principles apply also as well to the host of heaven as to the inhabitants of the earth.* The place we were born in, the hills over which we roamed in childhood, the school-house where we spelled

* Archangels.—1 Thess. iv. 16; Jude, 9. "One star differeth from another star in glory."—1 Cor. xv. 41.

our first syllable, together with every association, past, present, and future, have had and will continue to have, much to do in making up the infinite variety of the race. The absurdity, therefore, of a perfect religious uniformity is too obvious to be argued. Yet, as throughout the realms of sentient being there are great fundamental resemblances, these can nowhere be overlooked or disregarded. Revelation, as well as the whole divine arrangement, proceeds upon this assumption. The ostentatious show of a foreign "Evangelical Alliance," composed of spiritual potentates and the co-laborers of a union or mission Sabbath School, presents the "sublime and the ridiculous" in such intimate contrast as almost to excuse, if not constrain, the scoff of the world. Yet is it not as true as it is lamentable that a preponderating show of the moral forces of Christendom is at this moment being worse than wasted in perpetuating denominational differences? The Bible is searched, from Genesis to Revelation, to find a single word from which a remote inference can be drawn, to justify these division walls. A common origin, a common history, a common destiny to heaven or hell, a common plan of salvation, a common Saviour, a common regen-

eration, a common Holy Ghost, a common holiness, a common happiness or misery, a common victory or a common vanquish, are sunk beneath a sectarian predominance of this or that man, or this or that party.

These main issues may, indeed, be more or less affected by subordinate truths; but these bear about the same proportion to those that the mere shape of a figure 3 does to the science of mathematics. But for this division of forces, exaggerated by an artful foe, the church militant could march to an immediate conquest of the world.*

There need not be one denomination less; there might be many more, and the efficiency of each one be thereby increased, were they governed by the principle of love and charity, instead of jealousy and antagonism. Not one of the entire catalogue could then *afford* to forego the benefit of intercourse and Christian union; for a Christian could not be educated for heaven without the exercise of this common principle of charity and test of discipleship.†

What, then, is the principle of non-inter-

* See Note, p. 66.

† 1 John, iii. 10: "He that loveth not his brother, is not of God."

course, established by ecclesiastical organizations, but treachery to our Divine Leader; operating first to weaken, and then to betray the entire army to the adversary? No separate denomination can afford to be exclusive. It will only dry up and blow away, as the chaff, whenever it has had time to demonstrate its sin and folly. From these premises, it is also obvious that unions should be so formed, and so conducted, as to allow the free working of every religious sentiment, and the zealous advocacy of denominational extremes, even to the division and multiplication of congregations; but neither time nor affection is to be lost in discussing those that belong to the great fundamentals of revealed truth. If it should be said that these principles are impracticable, anticipating the millenium, we reply that our country is full of the exhibitions of their practicability, and that the Union Sabbath Schools are doing much to augment them. There is a growing popularity of movement in this direction. It may result in the formation of numerous small assemblages; but nothing short of these will enable Christianity, like an essence, to pervade the entire atmosphere. Numerous are the schools in New York and vicinity,

where various denominations are united in this common labor of love. Here we find the sweetest Christian fellowship; and we should never know of denominational divisions, but for the separate church communions to which they severally diverge, when they leave the school room. When this common bond of affection is once cemented by this common labor, there is no more danger in discussing a denominational preference than in speaking of individual idiosyncracies, of any kind. It is only when discussion is embittered by party "organs" stirring up the gangrene of sin and selfishness, until all is looked at through a jaundiced eye, that non-intercourse can be established. It is then powerful only for misunderstanding and exaggerating differences. We can only, however, be truly intelligent on these matters of difference, when we can calmly discuss them in love. Nothing, therefore, should be more simple and easy than the formation of these unions. In some places they are already formed, by simply appointing, in some general gathering, a president and secretary, to issue calls for public meetings and to regulate a monthly concert. Ordinarily, however, the method of forming these unions is, to

elect a board of directors, to whom the management of the affairs of the union is committed, under a constitution, a specimen of which we give in a note.*

* CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I.—This Association shall be called the ——— SABBATH SCHOOL UNION.

ARTICLE II.—The object of this Union shall be to encourage and assist those engaged in the superintendence and instruction of Sabbath schools; to improve the method of teaching; to promote the establishment of new schools—*especially for the destitute*—and to unite the christian sympathies, counsels, and labors of persons of different evangelical denominations, in this benevolent enterprise.

ARTICLE III.—The Union shall consist of the officers and teachers of such schools as shall vote to become members; of ministers of the churches with which these schools are connected; and of such other persons as shall contribute not less than one dollar annually to its funds.

ARTICLE IV.—The affairs of the Union shall be conducted by a *Board of ——— Managers, a Secretary, and Treasurer*, with power to fill all vacancies occurring in their number. After the first election, they shall be chosen yearly by ballot, without nomination. There shall be at least two Managers chosen from each denomination represented in the Union.

ARTICLE V.—It shall be the duty of the Board, in carrying into effect the objects of this Association, to provide the necessary books and papers, and, as far as practicable, copies of the Scriptures for the gratuitous use of the schools of the Union.

ARTICLE VI.—Any five or more persons disposed to open a school, in connection with the Union, after electing a Superintendent and Secretary, shall apply for admission through the Missionary Committee of the Board.

ARTICLE VII.—The Board shall hold monthly meetings; shall have power to establish schools in districts where the objects of this Union are not otherwise provided for; and also, to appoint

All facilities of holding property, and all stimulous to action that these boards or organizations may wield, should be made to contri-

visitors of all the schools in connection with the Union, whenever such a measure shall be deemed expedient.

ARTICLE VIII.—There shall be an Anniversary of the schools of the Union on such day in — of each year as the Board shall designate; and on the same day the Anniversary of the Union shall be observed, when annual reports of the Board of Managers and the Treasurer shall be read.

ARTICLE IX.—A Monthly Concert of Prayer for Sabbath Schools shall be held on the second Monday evening of every month. Special meetings of the Union shall be called by the Secretary, when requested by five members of the Board.

ARTICLE X.—All Committees and the Board of Managers shall be directly amenable to the Union.

ARTICLE XI.—This Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Union, with the concurrence of two-thirds of the members then present, provided the amendment shall have been proposed in writing at least one month previous.

BY-LAWS OF THE BOARD OF MANAGERS.

1. There shall be a *Committee of Ways and Means*, consisting of six (including the Treasurer), whose duty it shall be to make arrangements for procuring the funds required to carry forward the operations of the Union.

2. There shall be a *Missionary Committee* of twelve, viz.: one for each ward of the city, whose duty it shall be to assist feeble schools, and also to survey the ground, and establish new schools where they are needed.

3. There shall be a *Committee of Six* to make arrangements for all public meetings of the Union, who shall also provide for conducting the Monthly Concerts of Prayer.

bute directly to the strengthening of local formations. The light is to radiate from these, not from the central power. Hence the necessity of giving them independence and self-reliance. This machinery becomes the mere instrument with which all are assisted to do their work more effectually. It is only to operate when combined force is wanting, or when individuals would be less powerful or efficient.

As every town has its "*Smokey-Hollow*," every parish its "*Hard-Scrabble*," and every city its *Cimmerian vestibule to hell*, they may be thus associated, in order to see that every individual is reached with the means of grace and the power of Christian rebuke. Nor should any aristocracy of sin be exempt from the aggressive action of such Boards. Wealth and intelligence should not be unsuspected passports to perdition. In every school there may be a committee of the Superintendent and one or two teachers, to co-operate with the missionary committee in fixing their geographical bounds, that the Board may always know how much ground remains to be possessed.

Although nearly all the labor is to be per-

formed in the sub-divisions called committees, there will be occasion for the monthly meeting of the Board, to hear from each department and devise co-operative action. But committee meetings are more important.* Beware, however, of centralizing action. The direction of Christianity is always to be from a center to a circumference. The moment the order is reversed, there is a fearful collapse. So great is the misconception on this point, that churches and schools are sometimes afraid to have others locate near them, lest their own organization should be weakened; while not one man in twenty around them is in any connection with religious institutions. But weak is the faith of such; and he who pursues this narrow policy will be surrounded by a starving flock, "ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."†

* See "*Self-Denial*."

† "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth," &c., Prov, xi. 24-26. "He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly," &c., 2 Cor., ix. 6-10. This principle is forcibly illustrated in the history of two or three churches in the city of New York. Some years since, there was, in one of the lower wards of New York, a church of seven or eight hundred members, having a Sabbath School of about one hundred scholars. Notwithstanding this immense disproportion, it was with no little difficulty that teachers

The various outposts, with the Sabbath Schools of all evangelical denominations, may

could be found willing to instruct these few scholars. The church was surrounded by a dense population, and the public squares in the neighborhood were swarming with Sabbath breakers, to the great annoyance of those who would pass through them on the way to the sanctuary. A few individuals, whose eyes were open to the scene, resolved to procure a public school building near at hand, and invite the profane throng into it, and open to them the revelation of God to man. Individual applications were successfully made to various members of the church, and soon the school had 50 teachers and 300 scholars; and the public places around became silent and orderly. The church session immediately issued a mandate for these laborers to quit their work and return to the church school, where they were in such great need of laborers. As there were hundreds in the church unemployed, those at work could not be made to see the propriety of their recall from so important a post, and therefore refused to comply. The whole brotherhood were thereupon called together, and after the authority of the church in such matters had been most earnestly set forth, a vote was taken, and the action of the session sustained, the arraigned company of teachers quietly and almost unanimously rising to the negative. After a careful, humble, and prayerful inquiry as to their duty, this little band of laborers could not resist the conviction that the call of the church in this instance was not the call of God; and from that day to this, they have been prosecuting their work with great success, and without further molestation.

It would be difficult, perhaps, better to illustrate the true spirit of the Gospel, and set forth practically the truth of the passages of Scripture above quoted, than to present briefly the results of efforts which comparatively feeble churches have put forth in this department of labor. Some few years since, a small church embarked in the enterprise of establishing schools, and in the course of eighteen months, 2,000 children were gathered into these

be most profitably associated in a monthly concert of prayer. And this will complete the list of meetings which we propose to describe. It should not be a meeting for statistical reports, dry narrative, or much exhortation. Arrangements being made for its proper conduct, the meeting may be commenced by singing a hymn, and reading five or six verses of Scripture, comprising a single idea, subject, or suggestion. This should be followed by a short prayer, directly to the point. Generalizing here will at once scatter and put out the fire which you would ignite on this common altar. The reporting of the condition of the various schools in the connection may then be made, in rotation. The subject matter of the reports should be suggestive, and all of a spiritual or intellectual character. The encouragements or

schools, and \$5,000 expended in suitable accommodations for them. In another church, in less time, \$2,000 were raised for the same purpose, and as many or more pupils were gathered into their schools.

Hardly can there be found a church organization so feeble or so poor, but if, instead of soliciting aid from sister churches, to prolong a dying existence, they would pursue the elevating and self-denying work of acting upon the population immediately around them, they might pay their debts, have a full house, a useful minister, and a grace-growing church, continually blessing and being blessed.

discouragements, the failures or successes, improvement in teaching or attendance, with their causes, are always proper, if never spun out into disproportion. But the great end of this meeting is, to unite the enthusiasm of the Methodist with the order of the Episcopalian; the glow of the Baptist with the reasoning of the Presbyterian, and the independent thinking of the Congregationalist (would we could add the *obedience* of the Roman Catholic), in this spiritual banquet; each receiving a hundred-fold more than he gives. The theme with all should be, regeneration by the power of the Holy Ghost; the end, the glory of God in the salvation of souls. These exercises should be interspersed with short prayers, or occasionally an appropriate verse volunteered, or at least sung without reading, and known to all present. Not more than two or three minutes should ever be occupied with the doings of the board, except on a very special exigency. These meetings, if rightly conducted, are among the most precious of Christian gatherings.

This is the "Evangelical alliance," second only to that yet more sublime one, when, in the same Sabbath School, teachers from these several denominations are teaching the great

attributes of a God of love and power, justice, goodness, and truth, and unfolding the terrors of a judgment near at hand, with an eternal award of happiness or misery, and the necessity of a preparation, for all that awaits the human soul, in life, in death, and in eternity. In moral grandeur, the scene was only surpassed, when angels sang, "Glory to God and good will to men," over the infant in Bethlehem.

CHAPTER VII.

SELF-CULTURE.

WHAT more humiliating evidence of the downward tendency of our nature does the world furnish, than the slow proficiency the professed followers of Christ have made in the school of Christianity? How steadily have the lessons of the past poured their instructions upon the present, only to be again and again learned and quickly forgotten! The fact that from the first announcement of the Gospel, the Christian Church has not been like the rising sun, is clear proof that religion is an exotic in our world, only preserved and continued in an unfavorable soil, by the dews and showers that gently fall upon it from its native clime. But for this, instead of looking back for our brightest exemplifications of spiritual light and life, even to the apostolic age, every generation would furnish higher and yet loftier examples of holiness and consecration, that

would make every new page of our history increasingly luminous. The accumulated treasures of past knowledge and experience would have long since made the world effulgent in millennial glory. Every succeeding age should be an advance upon the previous; every heroic example of the past should gradually recede in the excelsior of the present, and the song of triumph rise from every quarter of the globe, octave on octave, till it unite the choral harmonies of earth and heaven in one eternal anthem.

Fellow Teachers in the Sabbath School! we, in our turn, are to educate ourselves, as best we can, in the lessons of the past and present, to the end that we may educate the immediate generation to follow. To help each other in this most important of all earthly vocations, is the design of the present chapter. Let us here premise that a few things will be taken for granted: First, That you regard God as the supreme object of your affections, and have made a full consecration of all you have and are to His service; Second, That you consider this as no mere formality for any earthly end, and have made no mental reservation; that, God helping you, you will live up to your

convictions, and your daily prayer shall be to know and do your duty, as a soldier now fully enlisted in the Christian army; Third, That you regard your calling to be a Sabbath School Teacher, as a profession to be studied and pursued with far more assiduity and zeal than would be justified in a calling to be a lawyer, a doctor, a merchant, or a mechanic. To qualify you for this pursuit every thing has to bend, and some things have to break; Fourth, That, however poor have been your past acquirements, from this time onward you are to make the most of every faculty God has given you, to improve until He come; that you intend to treat excuses which offer themselves as you do obtruding insects, and combat with every sinful passion and bad habit. And yet further, premising that you regard every misspent moment, every present lost opportunity, as increasing the probability of future failure and misfortune, we merely propose, in the brief hints which follow, to aid you in your own suggestions, which last must be relied upon as the source of future improvement.

1. Some of our strongest vices can only be attacked and conquered in single combat. Sometimes we shall have to continue the

struggle for weeks or months. Such has been the tenacity with which some "right eye" indulgence has clung to the soul, that reconsecration at the communion table, as in the presence of Christ now hanging on the cross, has been found the only expedient by which the subtle enemy could be dislodged.

2. Time, and some other sacrifices, will be found indispensable, however urgently or flatteringly the world may plead. System, however, will do much to redeem the time. No young person can regularly read twenty minutes each day, with attention, in a good book, well written, without becoming an educated man. Such a habit of daily improvement once contracted, we venture little in the prediction that his labors will be intelligently directed, and his usefulness extensively promoted. If time is thus limited, it must not be spent in reading periodicals of any kind, but books of history, science, or biography, well drawn up. Let every young Christian be thankful that so many of these are within his reach. Have the reading of but one book on hand at a time, especially if it be on the principles of science.

3. While employed, learn to think systematically on some subject, and not let the mind

wander into dreaming listlessness. Caution here is success everywhere else. Indifference here insures a useless life.

4. Imagination, which lives in the universal, and almost makes us omnipresent, must fly from the touch of pollution, as the finger from the burning coal. Through this medium, intercourse with God, as a person, not a principle, should be but little less intimate than in the regular devotions of morning or evening.

5. As the first sign of natural life is natural action; so the first indication of spiritual life should be spiritual action. As we burst the narrow limits of selfishness and pass into the realms of benevolence, creation will be clothed with a beauty we can for ever contemplate without satiety. Life can henceforth to us have no monotony. Every thought, nay, every atom, will have eternal relations.

6. In a course of self-culture, it would be difficult to tell whether the idea of wit or genius has not prevented more improvement than its real possession has ever supplied. In one, the pretence that he has it not, is the panacea to a disturbed conscience and the end of argument. In another, the conceit, of its possession forestalls application. And with

all, self-love would persuade us of its lurking presence, but too often self-indulgence suggests that this capricious and subtle essence, called genius, seldom or never points to a self-denying course of life.

A true genius and real tact will steadily point to perseverance, not only as the parent but also the offspring of all success and usefulness. Perseverance is the genius that all may possess. By it "the leaf of the mulberry becomes satin." In it is the only guarantee of success in any department of education or calling of usefulness. So magical is its power, that, with its aid, the most impotent will succeed, when, without it, the most potent would fail.

7. The hurried confusion that marks the life of some useful men, mars the work, and limits the attainment that would be reached were nothing to be undertaken without due *preparation*. If you would secure comfort, happiness, or usefulness, it can only be done by thought beforehand of what you are about to undertake. This remark is alike applicable to sacred and secular engagements.

8. A frequent conviction that it is too late to begin, is first cousin to the thief procrastination. No matter how old, no matter how

unfavorable the circumstances, present and future happiness, as well as usefulness, depend upon your beginning any and every system of personal improvement which it is desirable ever should have been begun.

9. Few conceive the vast amount of work they can perform if both the mind and body are kept in proper condition. It was the privilege of the all-accomplished ex-chancellor of England, Lord Brougham, to explode practically the old adage, that if we have too many irons in the fire some will burn, by a self-discipline that enabled him to say, when he had in "tongs, poker, and all," he never had so many as he wanted to keep himself employed. System, habit, and perseverance, are almost omnipotent instruments, with Heaven's blessing.

10. In the multitude of employments and the prosecution of business without distraction, there is a discipline of the mind and an inspiration of self-reliance which nothing else can equal, if thoroughly and patiently pursued.

11. It might be safe to assert, that in no place does the Christian suffer so much from lost opportunities as in religious meetings, especially when they are not conducted with skill and dispatch. So far from spending an

hour in a prayer meeting with profit, it may be safely assumed that here the hour may be worse than misspent. It may chill the soul, and crust it over with an impenetrable habit of indifference which it may require the strongest effort to break up. If excuse is sought in the cold formality of others, then it may be your first duty to seek to remove it. Often the canker will be found in our own spiritual sluggishness. Perhaps it may be said that there never was a prayer meeting at which it might not have been profitable for any one to attend. If, for want of objects of interest to speak of or pray for, the prayer meeting is dull to you, how loathsome must it be in the sight of Heaven! But if it is not always possible for you to take with you some subject for conversation or object of prayer, may it not be possible for you to rise above the influences which surround you? While here, you may hold spiritual communion with your Father in heaven. Here, too, you may bring before him the condition of this one or that one in whose case you are particularly interested. In another place we have spoken of the manner in which these meetings should be conducted. Scarcely does any one occasion in Christian experience

call for such a girding up of the loins of the mind, in order to reap the greatest possible blessing from meetings where so much of the allotted time of the Christian is spent. Here broken resolutions may at least be repaired and renewed; brotherly love may always be rekindled and jealousies smothered; the realities of eternity summoned to impress you with the glories of heaven or the terrors of hell. Here, as from a hill in the pathway of life, you pause to see how far you have come, and how far you have yet to go in Christian experience before your faith becomes fruition. A weekly record will enable the young Christian to ascertain whether he is progressing or retrograding in his Christian course—a vastly more important chart than was ever kept by ocean voyager. It is here the internal graces are furnished with much of the best nurture; and here you may make the first profession before man of your interest in Christ's kingdom. Among those who feel the same infirmities, you may open your mouth fearless of criticism, and practice the means of communicating your experience and exhortations that may make your whole life luminous. This should be the spiritual arsenal from which your armor shall

go forth, reflecting a brilliancy given it in secret prayer, and with ammunition prepared upon your knees over the pages of inspired truth.

12. It might be as difficult to correct a habit of drowsiness superinduced by position in public prayer in church, as to describe the sinfulness of that indifference we are apt to feel. The habit of unfaltering attention, and of following the minister in this exercise, will be of vast advantage in cherishing the desires that should ever be glowing in the heart. Failure here is almost sure to be followed by passivity and profitless inattention to the sermon and the songs of praise.

13. If no higher end were sought in the hearing of sermons than mental discipline for the purpose of self-education, here would be motive sufficient for the greatest wakefulness. But if you have chosen a competent teacher, you have in this simple provision the means of religious education. This, with a good degree of watchfulness and application, should preclude the excuse so often offered, that "I am not qualified to teach." Should you be unable to secure any other means of improvement, this is capable of furnishing you with themes for thought, conversation, and instruction that,

properly digested, will provide aliment for the entire man. In a Christian land where these ordinances are enjoyed, want of time and opportunity for any and every qualification for Christian usefulness, is an excuse to be given and received with suspicion of a disposition to neglect the improvement of one talent because five or ten are not given. To state how this may be done, would be taking time and space not now at command; for, less than the exercise of every faculty of the mind might be insufficient to show how great use might be made of these discourses. They are often heard as though all piety consisted in being at the place where they are delivered, or, as though there were no meaning in them; for, often, when praised most, they are most powerless in working out results.

14. Any theory of self-culture that omits just that weekly or rather daily critical examination of the Bible, which a preparation for the Teachers' Meeting and the class requires, is radically defective, and can only affect the mind and manners, without refining the heart. The best study of the lesson, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, educates all the faculties, and all the graces, at the same time.

No one was ever known to pursue this, for any length of time, without becoming truly wise. If you have risen above the childish habitude of thought, or feeling, that you may recollect once arrested your eye, if not aroused your aversion, as you glanced at the old-fashioned volume, and remembered the familiar but distasteful phrase, the old Saxon idiom and old age adaptations, you are prepared now for the study of those truths that have kindled the brightest genius that ever adorned your race. The lawyer and the scholar, the philosopher and the poet, not less than the saint, have humbled themselves to learn their highest lessons of wisdom here. Your research, also, among commentators and annotators, brings you in constant communion with the best heads and hearts that adorn the page of history. Infidels and skeptics, who have made any progress in real learning, have been obliged to meet such men as Chalmers and Butler on this ground, and suffer an ignominious defeat. The disciples of Hume, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Paine, with the spiritual infidels of our times, who have tried to vent the corrupt opposition of the human heart to God and his word, by false theories of reason and

philosophy, have fallen here before less gifted intellects, wielding only the weapons of divine truth. The Sabbath School system is to raise the body politic to the level of these moral teachers and philosophers, unless its friends prove recreant to their privileges. It was the gifted Chalmers who said his Sabbath School labors were a source of more consolation to him, because more resultful, than any of his brilliant achievements.

Our limits forbid the attempt to set forth any theory of learning or teaching; but, in another place, we have referred to some books, which no Teacher should fail carefully to peruse. If you have not time and opportunity for this, the Bible itself is sufficient for all. This is the chisel with which you are to sculpture, not a marble, which may delight the eye for a few generations, but which the summer suns and winter blasts would soon deface and destroy; but the moral statue of your pupil, every stroke on which leaves an indentation that is co-existent with his being. Not man, with his fallible standard of criticism, is to be the spectator, but angels and God himself. The tooth of time is not to destroy this monument of your skill; but generations, rolling on the slow cycles

of eternity, are the critics that will judge of your success in this school of immortal arts. Will you not study hard? Will you not strike softly and carefully on this yielding but hardening sensibility that is receiving every stroke of your instrument, however slight, with a response that echoes back a note of alarm from the caverns of hell, or sweetly reverberates along the sequestered retreats of the paradise above?

Pursued as this work of home preparation should be, in connection with the Teachers' Meeting, this concentration of private and social study and reflection is to create a moral heat that shall fuse the parts into a consistent whole. Thus the Teachers' Meeting is not only the *Normal School* that is to educate the Teacher for his class,* but the very embodiment of a Christian fellowship and sympathy, at once his demand and supply, for present life and future hope of usefulness and happiness here and hereafter.

* Viewed in this light, it will appear equally important, whether the Teacher has a class of Bible readers or not, that he should take part in the Bible lesson at the Teachers' Meeting. This will be the same thing to him as if he had remained in the "*Bible Class*" instead of becoming a Teacher.

15. If you are located where you have opportunity of hearing lectures, try to find time for some systematic reading upon the subjects treated of, and then you will be able to profit much by what would otherwise give you but a superficial view. Should you not be able to command time for this, it will help you much in your preparation for teaching a Sabbath School class, and being generally useful to the school, to remember and repeat by yourself what you have read, or what you have heard in public. This will deepen the impression upon your mind, and if attention is paid to the manner of repeating it, will finally do for you what a teacher in elocution might fail to do, had you both time and money to pay for such instruction.

16. It is not the mere moments, which are said to be the "golden sands of time," that may thus be rescued and made to accomplish by far the most important ends of life; but most fortunate is the person, who has not, in the course of the year, some days of partial indisposition, when some medicine for the mind, through these ministrations, will do much to make the sick-room cheerful, and rather relieve than oppress the physical powers. Try it, as

an agreeable "salad to the solitary," to intermix with profitable meditation.

17. While modern improvements have destroyed both the pleasure and the profit of traveling, the car, the steamboat, and the public-house, with some insuperable inconveniences may be converted into the study, and thus overruled to the great ends of life, both by thinking systematically and reading methodically. Shorn as traveling is of many great advantages, there are yet a thousand ways to make it talk, teach, and preach.

18. If any minutes can be gleaned from the pressing duties of life, and the immediate demand of those cares which will bear this dignified appellation, our social relations should be the first to claim attention. The evening would seem to invite to cheerful conversation, which should always be made to strengthen the mind, the body, and every virtue, by that agreeable exercise, properly limited to the drawing-room and the social circle. This is the finishing or polishing room, where the mere castings may glow with peculiar excellence, if the natural development is not made to assume or affect a fictitious character.

19. The study of character, the most im-

portant study of man, is a science that may be prosecuted in any and every condition of life; and a moment's contact may suggest a history of improvement. *Attention* and *Reflection* are the ministers in this school room of the world. *Self-application* is the schoolmaster, through the whole course.

20. Have you a companion? Know him well. Is he a clerk or fellow-apprentice? Insensibly instruct him, as you expect your lessons of wisdom from him. Is he a fellow-student? Walk together "the ambrosial way." In youth, get your lessons for old age to repeat; else, a freezing conservatism will be the result of disappointed hopes. At whatever age you die, resolve to die young. "The child shall die a hundred years old."

21. In the work of self-education, consider that you have not left the primary department until you can bear opprobrious epithets without emotion, and insult with pity.

22. Susceptibility to flattery is the most fatal snare that lies in the pathway to improvement. By it omnipotent grace is potently defied. It is the gangrene of corruption within, as well as the impenetrable shield against the armor of conviction from without. Flattery is the

bane of genius, the Baal and Ashtaroth of Idolatry, the offspring and the parent of all evil. Humility, its antithesis and antidote.

23. In carrying forward any successful system of self-improvement, little advance will be made if you have not courage to act where success is doubtful. Courage should be an ever-present friend, inducing us to *take the risk*, ambitious to rectify if mistaken, preventing self-reproach for mistakes, which show that you did not know any better, and guarding against the fear of lost honor or reputation, and the humbling of your pride under opprobrious epithets of persons or principles that claim your approval.

24. Poverty and wealth, prosperity and adversity, are only relative phrases, signifying different conditions of self-education. They are, however, almost always perverted, and made to say, "the time and the circumstances are not YET." The pupil in the school of Christ, should no more require hints for his improvement than the pupil in the pleasures of the world.

25. The first, the last, the only foe that will not yield to discipline, is selfishness. Every symptom must be watched, but the prescription must be aimed at the disease.

26. It will require even more patience to unlearn our faults than to inaugurate excellences. But in this school we require an enemy for a tutor.

27. God's theory of development, in all the laws that are known to govern this mundane system, involves in every step the process of carrying forward to every new manifestation the aggregate of the previous. Such should be the theory of the self-instructor, and his success will be always in a compound ratio.

28. History chronologically read, Biography self-applied, and Poetry studied as the grace and ornament of both thought and affection, will insure a welcome reception to every desirable school of improvement, refinement, and enjoyment.

29. Reflection is to the mind what digestion is to the body. Let it be regularly furnished with a wholesome aliment, and always directed to the great ends of life.

30. Never be afraid of plagiarism, in appropriating virtues or ideas; but be sure you make them your own before you use them.

31. The faculties of the mind like the muscles of the body, grow by exercise. The latter have a definite and limited capacity. It is the glory of the former, that they are to increase

eternally. The cultivation of the memory, reason, judgment, understanding, &c., with love, benevolence, and all the affections, appropriately employed, will insensibly create a present immortality. No opportunity should be lost, by writing, speaking, and reviewing your own or the best thoughts of others.

32. God's judgment, not man's, is always to be consulted in regard to the relative importance and value of things, both temporal and spiritual. Habitually adopt his standard, renouncing man's.

33. There can be no greater, and yet surely there is no more common mistake even among some good people, than to consider that life a failure, which does not accumulate some earthly treasure. That life only is a failure, which fails of its destiny, Heaven. That approximating a failure is his to whom no "abundant entrance" is administered, because of the unfaithful improvement of his one or more talents.

With infinite resources for improvement, it is obvious that every man, in every age, has the opportunity of becoming almost what he wills to be. Nor is it difficult to see that every generation has the means of improvement,

which lay every one under ever-increasing obligation to improve upon every previous experiment.

34. Practical activity in the service of your Master is the last hint our limits will permit us to give. It is not more true that our bodies grow by nourishment, than that our minds and graces are increased and strengthened by exercise. Imitation of Christ's example is the only true method of growing in grace. Introspection and analysis will oftener cloud than clear the spiritual vision; and it is contact with the outward world, in acts of benevolence, that Heaven has mostly ordained to be the highest means of self-culture. Glancing our eye in this direction, where and what are the arguments that press you to action? Look at the condition of three worlds, that now strike as forcibly the retina of the eye of faith as material worlds do that of nature:

The three converging or diverging lines that connect you sympathetically and electrically with them, are moved at every throb of your beating heart. Before you is hell. You see its iron gates, its blackened walls,—obscurely through its ascending smoke, you see its lurid flames. Imagination, that falters nowhere else,

is here appalled, and starting back, refuses to pass the dreadful boundary. But God has revealed it; the will commands it; truth demands it; she must survey the terrific, and telegraph the threatening doom. Your father, your mother, your brother, your sister, or your neighbor is there, and you must see them. You feel the sting of that accusing look. You feel the piercing power of that self-reproach. You feel the agony of fixed despair. At every touch of conscience, you shake with fear, and tremble with remorse. Anger shoots her arrows of revenge. Hate poisons every nerve and vein of feeling. Selfishness cries for another minister of woe. It comes in unhallowed lust. Misery lifts the eyelids shame had closed, only to behold a raving rival. Despair hears one ceaseless sound. It is ETERNITY! ETERNITY!! This, eternally,—*eternity, eternity, eternity!* A burning brimstone is now the incense of pride, the perfume of the damned. Rebellion re-echoes from every tower of idolatry, through every cavern of sin, and dies on the ocean of an unwasting gloom. Lost! and *What is lost!* peals eternally from the omniscience of memory. A history of love has become the fang that inserts the virus which feeds

the flame of raging madness. Is hell less than this? 'tis more. Who dares to say it is less, when inspiration has exhausted phrase and figure, and then proclaims the fire unquenchable, the pit bottomless! And this does not rouse you. Look again: There are they whom you knew unwarned on earth. Oh, Heaven! why didst thou not reveal a fiercer flame? Why not tell of other sorrows? Why not wave over these slumbering sensibilities a redder flame of wrath? for man will yet risk all these, and rush heedless on. But will you, professed disciple, hear this wail of woe, and see around you living columns of "bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh," move on in fearful phalanx; yea, see them with eyes of sense, as they reel and fall over the verge of the last precipice that hides them from your view; and yet require another voice than God's to arouse you to action? Thou God of love! could nothing short of this wake thy creature man from his deathlike slumber? Keen, sagacious man, avoiding danger and loving happiness, even amid the shattered fragments of his fallen greatness—must the smoking altar of the loved and lost, after 6,000 years, still call for victims, to vindicate God's faithfulness in

warning—his justice in condemning? Why wilt thou not commission every angel around thy throne to plead with him, and face to face? More hast thou done—ten thousand times more: thine own Son hath done this, as no created being could do it. His tears have wept a sympathy that burst the rocks, and moved earth and heaven and the grave. All this, and inconceivably more, professed lover of Jesus, has Heaven done to arm you with moral forces, to plead with your fellow men. In immediate contrast is set the entire inventory of heaven. An Almighty God has here exhibited, and we were about to say exhausted, infinitude to create and adorn an abode whose regal splendors have but shown the paucity of language in attempting to adumbrate to finite conception the happiness of heaven. The pangs of misery in the world of wo, and the ecstasy of bliss in the world of joy, are described and contrasted in language of the same momentous authority. Yet, so clearly are they revealed, that not a vapor obscures the vision, to any but the willing blind. Scarcely is there an atom of material or immaterial significance, but shoots its voice of reasoning through the dim rustle of events around us, into the very

depths of the future? How, then, do the relations of life press upon every point of our being, as the atmosphere presses upon the pores of the body, these eternal considerations! Sleep here is sleep on the crater of the boiling volcano, or in the falling foam of the cataract. You, dear Christian, have learned your lessons of entire consecration at the foot of the cross, on which hung an infinite Redeemer who bought you with his blood, that your devotement might be entire. Any misconception here, like a mistake in arithmetic, will increase at every step the difficulty of your future progress. Assuming this, we spread before you the world as it is, and ask you to pause and contemplate the destiny of every living man, and your relation to him, his to you, and all to the atonement and eternity.

To reason here, would be to insult your consciousness, and question the existence of the world around you, and your own relations to it. Hence, let the conviction sink deep into your mind and heart, that every word you speak, to the well-being of any individual, bears a more certain relation to the heart and work and aggregate of good in God's universe, than every drop of water to the ocean. This

relation will widen and augment, at every progressive step in your own entire future of time, and so on through all eternity. As you step forth with these convictions, clad in the armor of God's truth kept bright by constant use, you are by prayer to draw your inspiration directly from God manifest on Calvary.

CHAPTER VIII.

QUANTITY AND QUALITY.

RECURRING once more to the broad premises we have assumed (see Chapter I.), we hope it will not be deemed extravagant for us here to assert that the seminary of Practical Christianity is the world, and that every believer sustains in it a real professorship. Nor will it be pretended, by any one capable of judging of its nature or value, that there is, at any single point, any excess of Christianity, but everywhere a lamentable deficiency. So benign are its influences, so valuable its effects, so obvious its fruits, that, despite the depravity of the human heart, its enemy becomes its patron. So clearly has it been demonstrated that physical or pecuniary value is in exact proportion to the presence of moral power, that the intelligent infidel is as ready to subscribe for a meeting-house in the neighborhood of his property as the Christian. From the heart of

New and Old England to the extremity of civilization, is the value of commodities and securities in exact ratio to the moral forces which secure and protect them. From this point of view, alone, may be discerned the nature of vice and virtue; and the latter is so notoriously opposed to the former, and so immediately the result of Bible circulation and Bible reading, that we deem proof and illustration alike superfluous. He, then, who lifts his hand to intercept a ray of this moral light, is as suicidal to his interest for time as for eternity, and is no less irrational than he who would prevent the shining of the sun in the heavens.

We wish here also distinctly to assert, in order to avoid the suspicion that ambition for innovation may taint our motives, that we would neither alter, qualify, nor amend, in any essential feature, any of the existing institutions of Protestant Christianity. Our only object is to suggest whether other forces may not be added, without disturbing the harmony of those now existing, in which there shall be an adaptation to augment the transforming power of Gospel truth. We hope, in this chapter, so to vindicate the position now taken, in rela-

tion to all religious organizations and institutions, that we shall not be exposed to the charge of inconsistency, much less of opposition to any forms that now exist. If there shall seem to be a tendency in the views expressed, to undervalue true Protestant ordination, it is because we cannot on any other theory perceive any tenable or Scriptural ground between the Protestant idea of a ministry, and the Jewish and Catholic idea of a Priesthood. But this difference we clearly see on the theory that the power of ordination is in the brotherhood, to be exercised as Bible precedents justify and as expediency demands.

But, while we are examining the foundation upon which the superstructure rests, and so carefully guarding against liability to the suspicion that we are careless of existing institutions, we must not fail to observe and point out distinctly the practical evils resulting from false premises. Not even a fear of being so far misapprehended as to be called an "accuser of the brethren," may shake our purpose of declaring convictions which we can neither put on nor take off as we do our garments, but only as *evidence* constrains us. While, then, we stand by present arrangements as every

inch defensible, so far as they go, in their action and relations, we nevertheless see stupendous obstacles to be removed in order to make way for the indefinite extension of ministries equally important, if not many fold more powerful than any that have yet blessed the world. Very far is jealousy of *lay* influence on the part of the *clergy* (for convenience we must use these spurious terms), from being the first or chief of these obstacles. A true Protestant ministry, as at present constituted, in their teaching from the pulpit, powerful as that is, would not if they could, and could not if they would, oppose any serious obstacles to the free course of the Gospel. But when the idea of limitation or exclusiveness takes possession of the main body of Christ, co-operating with our depraved natures it works practically and disastrously on this wise: *Private Christians* (to use another misnomer), deny themselves *the right* to teach, preach, and use the other functions of a Christian; and thus evade the obligations imposed on them by the plainest injunctions of their Lord. So long as they feel that preaching belongs only to an ordained class of men, the pulpit thunders upon *their* obligations in vain. When, in the next breath, the

preacher qualifies and limits the liberty he gives, and attempts to show that the preaching to which he exhorts is different in *kind* as well as in degree, from his own, the pressure of obligation is removed. Better go to the ocean side and proclaim your message to the unreasoning tribes of the deep; for reasoning man will never heed it. Show him his right to attend to his business and pay his subscription, and he will feel his obligation, and do it manfully. But tell him there is a *limited* sense in which the Gospel permits him to be regarded as a preacher, while over his head hangs a divine interdiction to his going beyond that limit, without encroaching upon rights defined by revelation, and a technical phraseology 1,600 years old, and you will have instances here and there where one will have moral daring enough to go beyond these bounds; but the masses of Christians would as soon think of walking a mile, when at the start they should know they were cramped, belittled, and almost forbidden to creep, and that an omnipotent "*thou shalt not*" interposed to prevent their going more than half the distance. "But," says one, "is it not a sheer wickedness that men will not do what they

ought, because they may not do what they *ought not?*" At this point does the distinction between divine and human authority appear. Man says, "Unless you give yourself exclusively to the work and receive ordination, you cannot be one of the teaching class;" when God says, "You belong to the class, for I have but one; the only limitations I impose are these two: your number of 'talents,' and 'Let all things be done decently and in order'." And whatever imaginary beauty the other theory possesses, its moral deformity appears terrible when exhibited in practice. If we could penetrate and see its workings in the human heart, as we can see its awful consequences, its time-strengthened grasp would be loosened, and the Christian be aroused to obligations which he has hardly yet conceived.*

"But," continues the objector, "you have just admitted that there is no such power in the clergy to repress Christian activities, on the very scale you are advocating."

True, there is not; nor is the chief difficulty

* This fallacy of different *species* of Christians which divides into *lay* and *clerical*, took possession of the church at a very early period, and only at brief intervals has it been thrown off. But, only in proportion as it has been thrown off, has Christianity been progressive.

with them. If so, it were easily curable. The chief opposition is to be encountered from another quarter. Does any man step forward from the "laity" to urge the claims of the Gospel upon his fellow men, although he may be taken by the hand and welcomed by the clergy, he, nevertheless, meets often the insolent rebuke from his lay brethren, or they turn from him with contempt, in sullen, silent neglect; thus demanding of him *his right* to exhort or instruct others. There are Christians not a few, who will not go to a prayer meeting because of their contempt for "lay-preaching." Can graces grow in such a soul? Thus, as we have said, a faithful ministry may as well enforce obligation in a grave-yard, with the hope of arousing the dead to action, as work or hope for a general revival of Christianity among men until all shall be made to feel their obligation, through a clear apprehension of their rights.

Yet again, it is asked, "Would not this introduce inextricable confusion? And why should there not be a clerical profession, as well as one of law or of physic? We mean nothing more," says the objector to our theory, "by the designation of clergy and laity than we do by the terms *lawyer* and *doctor*."

The illustration, by these professions, does

not apply here, for the reason that all men do not require instruction in law or medicine ; but all men do require instruction in religion. The community is not divided into classes by doctors and lawyers ; for all do not sustain inevitable relations to these professions. But all in the community should bear to religion the relation of *teacher* or *taught*, because the want is common to all. If we would take an exact illustration of our theory, we shall find it in the school teacher. Here all bear to their instructors a certain relation, for all are in want of an education.

“But are there not some licensed school teachers?”

Yes ; and this is manifestly proper and expedient, and proceeds directly on our basis ; for this does not affect the genuineness of the teaching of those who teach without license. For reasons too obvious to be mentioned, it is important that the public school-teacher and others have special licenses, to draw public money, &c., &c. ; but this does not exalt them into an order, nor separate them into a class. Equally important is ordination ; but this does not separate into a class or order.

“But would there not be endless confusion

in assemblies, if this indiscriminate method of teaching Christianity were permitted?"

No more than in education. There is nothing in this system but would be injured by any attempt further to regulate it. From the veriest pedagogue to the wisest philosopher of our age, there is gradation, license, &c., but no separation of orders, and nothing but the most efficient harmony. Just so orderly and beautifully efficient is the relation of every rank of education, from the school-house to the college, universal license giving no right to enter and teach without permission.

"But would not some claim to be teachers who were not fit for it, and who would teach error?"

Yes; but other theories do not prevent the teaching of error; and therefore the force of truth must not be weakened by repression and limitation.

"But was not this thing of *free preaching* inaugurated by Cromwell, or in his day, when officers and private soldiers were preachers, and every camp a church and a prayer-meeting?"

Yes; and that was the birthday of nearly all the civil and religious liberty enjoyed at the present day in England, and even in this country.

We frankly confess, then, that we see no two classes of Christians in the New Testament; and no justification of the recognized relation of *clergy* and *laity*.* As he who declared, "All ye are brethren," anticipated the spontaneous rising of such claims in the hearts of his followers,† he taught the lesson of perfect equality, by washing his disciples' feet, the most significant ceremony in his whole course, if we except the Lord's Supper, which was of correlative significance. That those who were ordained and those who were not, felt equal obligation and equal liberty to preach the Gospel, is obvious.‡ Paul specified the various functions necessary to the propagation of divine truth, in the most formal manner, and with particular specification, in Eph. iv. 11:

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."

The combination or limitation of these functions, or the indefinite expansion of them, is alike reprehensible, whether in the Protestant

* "All ye are brethren."—Mat. xxiii. 8.

† Mat. xx. 20: Sons of Zebedee.

‡ See Aquila and Priscilla teaching Apollos, and Philip baptizing the eunuch.

or Catholic church; for in either, custom is substituting and exalting human wisdom above the divine. All the heart-burning and jealousy that have arisen,* and that still exist, have come from *claims* that involve antagonism. When we hear a man attempt to magnify a mere office, above his privilege of being a Christian, which is everywhere in the New Testament represented to be the highest style of a man,† it strikes us as simply absurd. The attempt to establish such claims by divine right, in distinction from all rights which are divine, is no less absurd. Doubtless, the avocation or calling of all men, if it be innocent and useful, is divine. But again, as though inspiration were anticipated to be the only authority which could effectually refute such pretension, it is expressly written, that no one class of officials or functionaries should ever successfully plead for prerogative or gradation here:

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free;

* See *Shady Side*, and all other *sides*, presented from New England.

† See General Epistles of Peter.

and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where *were* the body? But now *are they* many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness. For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that *part* which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. *Are* all apostles? *are* all prophets? *are* all teachers? *are* all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts. And yet shew I unto you a more excellent way."—1 Cor. xii. 13—31.

Who will pretend that this is not intended to represent every member of the body of Christ, which is the church; is not expressly designed to make manifest the absurdity of the

idea that one member holds privileges and rights by a special or different tenure from the rest? One part may be more comely than another, but this in no wise alters its relation or divides the brotherhood. We repeat, then, that phrases which teach such errors as these should be studiously avoided. There is no *clergy* or *laity* in the New Testament. Alike reprehensible is it to retain the phrase "Under Shepherds." Not only is it true that there is no such phrase in the Bible, but the spirit of Christ's teaching, from beginning to end, exposes it, as really opposed to every principle of his government. It would not be difficult to show, were this the time and place, not only that the violation of this plain principle of the equal rights and privileges of all Christians, is the immediate cause of the priestcraft that has perverted and cursed the Roman church; but also, that it is the fruitful source of heart-burning and bickering, as well as of the starvation of the best ministry and the best men the world has ever yet seen.

It is with extreme reluctance that we have alluded to a subject that has been considered debatable, in a treatise so purely practical as this. Nothing would have overcome it, but the fact that observation and experience force the

conviction that it is impossible to give to small organizations the element of power, without extending to them the provisions of the Gospel, in their simple, yet efficient form. If a teaching ministry cannot be almost indefinitely extended, Christianity will reach its maximum far short of millennial completeness ; or, what is equally certain, the Christian church can never have the teaching talent to which she is entitled. So important is this point, that we pause for a moment to illustrate it experimentally. Passing by the great and innumerable evils growing out of metropolitan or large village churches, which gather into one or a few assemblies all the power and wealth of a Christian community, we come immediately to what concerns us in establishing schools and small Christian organizations. Although these are so perfectly Christian as to render them the most precious associations in life, yet their success (if the contradiction may be correctly understood) involves their failure. For example : A school is established ; the teachers are connected with various churches ; God blesses their labors, and souls are converted ; the new converts are advised to go to a distant church, to them unfamiliar and foreign ; the feeble church is passed by, to hear the popular minis-

ter; if the young convert survives the chilling shock of the first isolation and exposure, succeeding a genial atmosphere, the result is, a formal and idle Christian. His Christian emotions all terminate in a vitiated desire to hear sermons. He takes the moral phase of objects surrounding him, and his religion soon consists, *if quite a saint*, in going once a week to a prayer meeting. The loss is mutual. He has lost the school, and the school has lost him; and there is little compensatory gain. Possibly his religion will become more artistic, and if he has the taste and the means, he may reach a higher point of civilization; though this is not clear.

It will be seen at a glance that the ordinances of the Gospel are not administered in such a school; and therefore something beyond must be supplied, to secure the entire interest of the teachers, or the complete spiritual education of the scholar. What must it have? Obviously, a church organization and the ordinances, when these converts begin to be multiplied; and the teachers must concentrate their interest here. But can they support a minister? Evidently not, on the present scale of education and expense. But might not men be found, ordained or not, as circumstances might require,

who should here administer the ordinances, and yet pursue their daily avocations; and would not such a process greatly invigorate the spiritual forces of the church? *Ordination* only means solemn and prayerful *designation*, in the Scripture sense; and such a process would only bring into the ministry many more educated and competent Christian men, judges, lawyers, doctors, and all who are competent, but who do not now feel called to preach the Gospel. Thousands also would be thus in training, who can never go through a regular process of education; though the number of the latter would speedily be increased many fold.

Hastily some may conclude that this would mar the beauty of an educated ministry. But the whole church would thus become a ministry more or less educated. Besides, has the moral force of any denomination been in proportion to the education of her ministry, or rather in proportion to the zeal and devotion of it.* Should not learned Christian men, retired Christians, devote themselves to such a ministry as this, rather than to amateur sports and genteel recreation, when they have a competency for their support; or, as is often the case,

* See Isaac Taylor's "*Methodism*,"

when their business will afford them but a partial support? Once popularize this view, which seems to us so entirely Scriptural, and so much of the best talent of the church would not remain wholly unavailable. No *fitness*, no talent or moral culture, is now felt to lay its possessor under obligation to preach the Gospel, unless he has arrived at it by a certain technical process of training. The course we urge would not disturb any present relations, but would inaugurate other forces, which Christ and his Church *must have* before the Gospel can be universally diffused. A late governor of the State of New York, when lecturing before the Mercantile Library Association, all on a sudden corrected himself, as though he had unwittingly committed blasphemy. Why? Following the natural drift of his subject, he had begun to speak of the religious faith of the young men that composed his auditory; but, alarmed and confounded, he begged pardon for having *invaded the rights of the clergy!* and turned off into what he thought an unprofessional *commonalty*. What was this but betraying Christianity, and ignoring the spirit of the New Testament, in the presence of those who would feel its influence for life? Such men,

(or rather *not* such) would improve their own graces, and greatly advance the interests of Christ's kingdom, by preaching at least once every Sabbath. If they would do this, instead of sitting quietly down to hear some one preach not half so well qualified as themselves to speak to edification, the whole body would be much more profited. Misconception on this important point may continue to divest the church, as in ages past, of one half her inherent force.

While this sentiment of a perfect clerical monopoly so widely prevails, as to render preaching a sheer technicality, both of phrase and profession, the church must lose an endless variety of talent and experience, necessary to enrich her august ministrations. This idea has obtained such a controlling influence that only those who start for the ministry at from eighteen to twenty-two years of age, are ever expected even to reach it. As the area of Christianity is now so rapidly extending, it is impossible to avoid anxiety lest the advance of the church should be arrested, by this general misapprehension of what constitutes a ministry, in the New Testament sense. Nor is it less apparent that this idea places all the

parties in the wrong relation to each other, to secure the highest good of all. Men do not want others to *love them professionally*, or because it is their particular duty to do so; and they will certainly starve out such an idea, or at least shut up before it their deepest sympathies. On the other hand, it involves the best men, the most sensitive, in a sort of mendicancy, which is often felt to the quick. The confusion growing out of the relation, in the minds of men, amounts to little less than a difficulty of determining whether the *authorized* teachers in religion are not part man and part angel, with a considerable preponderance of the former. The world, moreover, treats them often as though their proper place was only to be found among "old women!" having nothing to do but to "preach the Gospel" abstractly, and let the world, at least the enterprising part of it, entirely alone. The world is not to be converted to Christ until the general mind is chased out of such vagaries, and made, not only to consider, but to feel the power of a ministry which it cannot misunderstand. Spontaneity is not the less such, because its source is from above. The moment interests isolate and draw in diverse directions,

they become selfish and earthly, and work mischievously. The most superficial cannot have failed to observe that there is now wanting the perfect identity of interest, so essential to the greatest good and happiness of all co-laborers.

Does any one say that we are touching the Ark with unhallowed hands; that, with this "*esprit du corps*" of a *sacred class* would disappear the dignity of the holy calling; that unless this *caste* is kept up, the whole moral superstructure that is built upon it will fall, and bury in its ruins all that is dear to human society? Such have been the apprehensions of the devotees of every caste, political, civil, or religious, that has yet yielded to the humbling truths of the Gospel. Not a form of idolatry, nor a fragment of despotism, but has departed amid the funereal lamentations of devoted worshipers; not a heathen temple ever yet fell, but upon crushed hearts; and the last lingering pride that will yield to the transforming power of revealed truth, will depart with the last pang of the Hindoo Brahmin, or expire in the sacred flame which the pale-faced vestal shall kindle for the last time on some altar now wet with tearful vigils.

Just in the proportion as we approach Christ, we should approach one another in the love of Christ, and remove every occasion of jealousy. Most earnestly do we here invoke Heaven that, whatever else in righteous judgment God may deny us, He will never withhold a love to the entire brotherhood, that shall know no distinctions on earth, as it can know no separations in heaven. If we had but one exhortation to bequeath to the church in the world, it should be that of the beloved disciple, "Love one another."

Yet further to plead for this unity of labor, and to illustrate what we mean by the unlimited extension of these organizations and ministries of religion, we refer to some facts that have come within our personal experience. In a Union or Mission Sabbath School in New York there were about 40 Teachers and 200 scholars, the latter drawn from the very purlieus of perdition. The school had not been long organized before some fruit began to appear, under new and interesting phases, which we hope it may not be deemed inapposite here briefly to sketch: At the Teachers' meeting, as was often the case, the inquiry was made whether there was any evidence of seri-

ousness in any of the classes. The answer had been for some weeks in the negative ; when, at length, one female teacher feelingly replied, " One of my scholars seems to be attentive and serious." At the next meeting, when the same inquiry was made, several in that class were reported as being in the same inquiring state of mind. One or two more teachers reported favorable indications among their pupils. The third week some half dozen teachers reported many of their scholars in distress on account of their lost condition as sinners against God. The following Sabbath before the close of the school, the Superintendent explained that he was about to invite the children who felt that they were sinners, and who were determined to give their hearts to Christ, to remain after those who felt no such concern should retire. This being very definitely repeated, the invitation was given, and after the school generally had retired, there were left sitting about in a large room, some 15 or 20 scholars. They were requested to come forward, and sit together on the front seat. No sooner were they addressed on the subject of religion than they began to weep, and in the course of five minutes the voice of the speaker

was drowned in the sobs of the scholars. Time and means were taken by the two individuals who had been appointed to remain, to allay the excitement. The Holy Ghost seemed to be as sensibly present as though manifested in a "rushing mighty wind." After proper counsel the scholars were, for that day, dismissed. This scene was described at the next Teachers' meeting, which produced a corresponding state of feeling there. The lesson was omitted, and the hour devoted to prayer. The next Sabbath, when the same invitation was given, some thirty or forty remained, and something of the same excitement was manifest as soon as they were spoken to. Those who remained with them resolved to take them one by one, and question them on their personal experience. More than three-fourths of them gave as intelligent evidence of having "passed from death unto life," as was ever given in the presence of the writer before an examining Committee for church admission, in a dozen years' experience. These exercises were continued from Sabbath to Sabbath for some weeks, when the highest number in attendance reached about fifty. The spring approaching, fear was entertained that, through

the laxity of teachers and the increasing temptations of scholars, these would return to their former habits of sin ; for many of them had been simple incarnations of evil. Pains were taken to get them together once during the week, and instruct them in the doctrines of Christianity. This class, however, grew gradually smaller till midsummer, when it was suspended. Perhaps a dozen of this number fought their way through every variety of opposition, until they literally forced themselves into the Christian churches from which their Teachers came. Some of them afterwards preached the Gospel, as missionaries, in South Africa and other fields ; and most if not all who joined the Christian church lived Christian lives. The remainder were lost in the labyrinth of city life ; and why ? Because there were not Christian means, and Christian guards, and Christian organizations adapted to their wants. Do you say that, if they had been truly converted they would not have gone back ? As reasonably apply your doctrine to a new-born infant ! expose him naked to the rigors of a Siberian winter, and say, “ If there is life in him, he will not die.”

What we deduce from this narrative is this: It is impossible, were it desirable, for such a cluster of teachers to erect a church, or support a minister if they had one erected. But it is possible, were there the willingness to engage in a proper division of labor, for some suitably educated person to take charge of such a company of newly converted youth and train them for the kingdom of Christ. This can be done, through instrumentalities which the Gospel theory authorizes and furnishes. Could not such a ministry be profitably realized in the persons of many, who have not been educated from childhood *for an office*?

But the demand for the intelligence of the church, to fill positions clearly indicated by the wants of the community, is still subordinate to yet higher considerations that may be urged against a technical preaching monopoly, which is made to mark a distinction in *kind*, where should only be one in *degree*. The most competent men in every community, to teach large or small assemblies, are thus gathered into one congregation, ever receiving, but never distributing to others the advantages of their experience and learning. Our Sabbath

Schools, with here and there an illustrious exception,* are notoriously destitute of the educated talent of the church. In the light of this identity of Christians in respect of work for their Master, may be seen not only the true dignity, but the true safety of both teacher and taught. Commit and limit the teaching to a class, exclusively educated for it, and you have but to corrupt that class, and neither few years nor centuries are sufficient again to educate and inaugurate the teachers of truth. See the history of Presbyterianism in England, and a similar history in Massachusetts, only briefer because of the vigorous virtue and general intelligence we are pleading for throughout the church. Where else is the assurance that the future may not be as the past? Yet more forcible does this view appear, when we contemplate the more than possibility of the withholding of the truth by those who depend upon the power of the rich, or upon the mere pecuniary or political authority of a day

* The present governors of New York and Pennsylvania are Sabbath School teachers. They could each not less interest any community, by giving a weekly discourse on the subject uppermost in their thoughts and affections, did not the established religious regulations regard it as improper, or rather forbid it.

or year. And who is exempt from such an influence? Were the church throughout liberated and active as it should be, there could be no danger from discussions, of whatever name or nature; for truth would everywhere be found stronger than error.*

We forbear traversing further upon the grounds that lie obliquely along our path; and hasten to the close of this desultory digression, by barely giving a brief inventory of the characteristics which we hope every superintendent, teacher, and scholar will strive to attain. While there are others equally important,—important to an almost unlimited degree, let us not be understood as erecting any standard as a test for admission to any and every place in the school. If you have any one of these characteristics, that is a reason for your entering and obtaining more. If you have no one of them, this is a reason why

* A clergyman in an English parish, where Mr. Gough recently lectured, was invited to preach on the subject of intemperance. He declined. When pressed from numerous sources and considerations, in view of the state of his parish, he still declined. To his best friends he could only explain by saying *he had his reasons*. At length, when he could no longer withhold his reasons, he said that Mr. ——— supported him, and the parish would be without preaching the moment he opened his mouth on that subject.

you should immediately enter, in order to obtain one. We give them only to show how various are the excellencies that may find aliment for their growth, and room for their exercise here. *Are you a Superintendent?* covet the best gifts, such as: unadulterated love; purified ambition; a vigorous mind and healthy body; a conquered pride, and subdued temper; indefatigable zeal and holy enthusiasm; patient application; persevering energy; a watchful eye, and ready hand; a rapid step, and a living heart; a glowing friendship and an earnest faith; a nice discrimination and fervent charity; an intelligent belief and a cheerful hope; a quick apprehension and the power of application; unaffected humility with exulting joy; a meek reliance and hopeful trust; a musical ear and a disciplined voice; a bridled tongue and fluent speech; diligent dispatch and dreamless mind; habits of order and easy accomplishment; dauntless courage and a rejoicing fear; a tender conscience and a valiant soul. Be a logical reasoner, a metaphysical thinker; an objective talker, a subjective reader; a true philosopher, an erudite scholar. Cherish daring independence and brotherly fellowship; discriminating capacity and yielding kindness; a lively disposition and sober

goodness ; a quick invention ; a various genius. Be a constant student ; knowing all of something, much of every thing.

Are you a Teacher ? Here, again, allow us to hint a few graces, as suggestive of the countless list that you may here employ in your Master's service : A love unfeigned, and guileless lips ; a winning way and patient spirit ; grace of action and a kindly speech ; a good memory and accurate learning ; a tranquil mind and a glowing imagination ; a fund of anecdote and apt illustrations ; a penetrating friendship and sacrificing devotion ; an unselfish aim and a quick apprehension. Be confident of the present, doubtful of the future ; amiably yielding while honestly contending. Unite unwavering trust with a holy fear ; calm submission with resolve, promoting good and checking evil ; a tranquil spirit and a truthful tongue. Be of studious mind and earnest life.

Are you a scholar ? Strive to be neat, obedient, attentive, modest, quiet, and studious in the school-room ; playful when out of it on week days ; pure in thought and language ; watchful for improvement in learning, manners, speech, and behavior.

CHAPTER IX.

ORGANIZING.

IF we can learn the value of blessings only by the loss, how is the American Christian ever to arrive at a due appreciation of his religious liberty? Want of freedom to exercise inalienable rights—rights as common to the race as the gift of speech, or the air we breathe, has been and is yet the strongest barrier to universal emancipation from sin and slavery. You cannot bind the body or dwarf the mind, and leave the conscience free. Deep as it is buried in the ruins of the fall, there ever has been—God be thanked there ever will be—a gravitation upward, superior to that which sways it downward, when left unrestrained by the fetters of human governments. Man oppressing his fellow *spiritually*, is the one characteristic of all governments, if, indeed, we should not now except a small area, holding on with a tremulous grasp, to a blood-bought

prize. It is Satan astride the church once Christian, and yet claiming the name, that now, more than all other forms of idolatry, is preventing the advance of Christ's Kingdom. Satan himself could not retain this position for a year, except by his ingenuity in keeping up a perpetual harangue in the vindication of his claims as the spiritual guide. The concession of Christendom that we must have some other spiritual guide than Christ and his Word, places the official reins in his hands; and thus he is not only a usurper, but a successful charioteer driving on empires of subjects along the Appian way of sin to death and damnation.

Dear Christian, the privilege of electing your brother to this or that post of usefulness, is the costliest, and should be the sweetest privilege of your life. Nor is this duty more precious than delicate. We step nowhere so cautiously as here. How to elect and how to avoid electing, are equally difficult of solution. We only attempt to indicate "a way" the least liable to objection. As nothing is so valuable as religious liberty, so nothing is to be watched with such unceasing jealousy as delegated religious power. We would even

say, grudgingly give it, except when felt to be absolutely necessary for an obvious end. Self-government involves all this and much more. But Christianity cannot take an organized form without the exercise of this function. Mothers should know how to teach the performance of duties so precious as these to their children. Christian mothers, if this provoke your smile, allow me to say to you, as you hasten away from all business meetings of your church, that you voluntarily abandon your rights and surrender a privilege, the want of which now fatally oppresses your sex in every nation not speaking the English tongue. Perhaps we should say here that we are no advocates for *more than* your rights. But to be present, and often to vote in religious meetings, is not only a privilege but a duty, neglected at great peril. The fundamental principles that underlie all religious communities, are, equality of rights in the popular sense, with strict accountability to the common constituency. Any departure from the apostolic rule, "*decently and in order*," which is the only limitation of religious assemblies, involves discipline and excommunication. Such may be

the circumstances as to justify the exercise of an appointing power from without; although this is an exception to the general rule, and never to be exercised when a popular constituency have an intelligent idea of what is to be done, or are not entirely ignorant of the manner of doing it, as in the cases quoted and implied, where Paul gave his injunction to Timothy and Titus. This duty, except as above limited, will devolve upon the smallest number supposable in the incipient movement, equally with the largest number that may organize a Sunday School, in connection with any congregation. Every Sabbath School should be commenced and carried on as a distinct organization; otherwise it will lack inherent force; and if dependent upon a foreign treasury, it will want supplies, and fail to secure local interest, prayer, and earnest support from its general constituency. If, in the State, it may be safely assumed that a people are capable of self-government, what a reflection is it upon the body of Christ, that it should be deemed, by any fractional part thereof, incapable of carrying out the spirit of his teaching.

Rules are for voluntary adoption, and to

point, as a guide-board, to the way in which travelers on a central road may agree to walk together, Amos, iii. 3.

There are two grounds on which an organization should be determined upon in a given case: The first is, the felt obligation, in consequence of being called and competent, to the successful prosecution of such a work. The second is, the discovery of the need of such an institution, in a given locality. Upon such discovery, the Christian should take immediate measures to establish it. The first measure is, to provide a competent Superintendent, and then to co-operate with him in procuring both teachers and scholars.

The teachers being assembled, any one may move to go into an election for Superintendent. If seconded, the mover may put the question by *yea* and *nay*; and if carried by a major vote, the election may proceed by *balloting, without nomination*. If the majority are not concentrated on any individual, the one receiving the highest number of votes may be considered in nomination; and if the next ballot does not elect him, it may be taken for granted that there is a good reason. In cases which should not be frequent, another, the next

highest number, may be considered in nomination ; and so on, until some one shall command a majority. A plurality may elect, if by vote all decide to abide by it. The individual elected should immediately take the chair, when a secretary and librarian, or any other functionary may be elected in the same way.

The time and place of election should be adapted to the convenience of the majority, and duly notified, where previous organization has existed. Elections should rarely be permitted to run over the limit of the year, and never without a reason ; nor should they be adjourned on account of weather, or a slim attendance, if a quorum is present. If a constitution is desired, it may be prepared by a committee appointed for the purpose, and adopted at the next Teachers' Meeting, article by article. All committees may be appointed by the Superintendent, or, if the teachers prefer, by a *viva voce* vote. Ladies should always vote, where no legal question is to be affected by it.

In the more general organizations, embracing various denominations, different methods of election may be pursued. Notices of elections for given purposes, being simultaneously published

in the different pulpits, will secure a representation from the several denominations, when any method that will accomplish the end may be adopted. If a constitutional union is to be formed, as described in a previous chapter, a delegation of equal numbers from each party to be represented, may be elected; always keeping in mind the rights of minorities, or small denominations, after the pattern of the United States Senate. Healthful, spiritual, working unions may be formed, upon a much simpler basis, and be highly useful, especially when detail is rather to be avoided than sought. It may be only necessary to elect a chairman and secretary, or even to say how and by whom meetings shall be called, leaving each meeting to organize itself, and you have an "Evangelical Alliance" of the best type. Organizations thus simple, by appointing judicious committees, may fix times for general meetings, elections, specific gatherings, &c., and provide for excursions, anniversaries, conventions, &c. Means may be raised at such meetings for desirable purposes; and when only one or two schools are to be commenced, with reference to given localities, measures for doing this can be here devised, always keeping in view the great danger of centralizing influences.

The interest universally felt in general gatherings, such as conventions, anniversaries, excursions, &c., where invention and propriety are so harmoniously blended, and in which the circumstances appropriately governing suggest rules peculiar to each assembly, forbids that any one course should be prescribed, lest the whole might be injured by an attempt at uniformity.

The principle must first be established as fundamental, and never to be (in spirit, at least) departed from, that all authority and power unquestionably abide with the entire brotherhood or constituency. Then there will be little difficulty, ordinarily, in arriving at suitable methods of getting this expressed so as to meet the desires of a majority. It is because of the careless, slovenly manner in which such things are done, that results are so few and unsatisfactory. If Christian brethren will take the pains to carry into the practices of religious organizations a tithe of that thought and precision which regulate the workshop or the counting-room, there will be no want of success or of progress. Hardly any question in common life, religion, or yet in metaphysics, but would be intelligently and correctly terminated, if a dozen Christian brethren were fully to discuss

it, and then decide it by a majority vote. It is of infinite importance that we dismiss the idea that "any thing will do in religion." A want of punctuality at the place of business, method in your ledger, obedience in your subordinates, promptness in payment at bank, and habits of frugality and industry, involve a failure, which may be retrieved; but in the spiritual kingdom, every loss is eternal.

Gladly should we close the chapter here, but fidelity constrains us to add that there are oftentimes much greater difficulties in getting improper persons out of office, than in getting proper persons into them. To the general indifference to the punctual performance of religious duties, add the aversion felt to some *good men*, who, in their proper places, would be beloved and useful, and you have the elements of general chaos. Spiritual arrogance, affected modesty, and insufferable self-conceit, seem to us to present the most formidable obstacles to the easy movement of our delicate machinery. Perhaps we cannot better illustrate our meaning, than by presenting a hypothetical case, which has many a counterpart in veritable history. Mr. A—— was, many years ago, informally requested to take charge of the

Sabbath School, which he, very properly, did. By good management, and what of knowledge was current at that day, the school reached its maximum, but no election was thought of for eight years; and men, measures, and children all grew old together. Every feature of the school having become as familiar as Webster's spelling-book, it excited no present interest.

Our Superintendent, being deacon of the church, grew pre-eminently conservative, and looked with dread and jealousy upon innovations. His frown had successfully repressed a thousand emotions that might have grown into revolts and rebellions. He was a prudent, thriving man, and therefore, of unbounded influence; for doubtless upon his shoulders were weighty responsibilities, and justly was he considered, by the good people of the parish, as the pillar of the church, and the key-stone of good society. He had virtually settled pastors, regulated the matters of the parish judiciously, lived a good Christian life; and his "well done good and faithful servant" was heard in heaven, and he passed to his reward.

Times had changed a little, and Mr. B—— was *elected* to fill the place of Mr. A—— in the

Sabbath School. No new organization was thought of. The teachers were surprised to find, a few weeks after the funeral, fifty new faces in the Sabbath School. Mr. B—— combined with an ardent piety an amount of zeal, and perhaps of sympathy and enterprise, that indicated him as just the man for the office of Superintendent; and it was thought fortunate for the school that he was elected. Many improvements were suggested and quickly introduced into the school, with great satisfaction to many of the teachers. But some thought more of the “good old way,” and did not heartily co-operate, having doubts. A revival followed, and many in the Sabbath School were born into the kingdom. There was another deacon, Mr. S——, in the church, who thought the conversions might not be genuine, for Mr. B—— came from a neighborhood where, forty years ago, there had been some religious extravagance. The spiritual life of the children was subjected to so severe a test that many of them became frozen, during the cold and deadening winter that followed this genial spring and summer. Some, however, were gathered in, and all but one or two, a number less than the proportion of spurious apostles,

were, in charity, Christians, and lived up to the ordinary standard around them.

Whenever the Sabbath School* was alluded to, Deacon S—— gave a significant, wise look, and such a demi-official conservative smile and shrugging of the shoulders, as has a thousand times nipped youthful piety in the bud, and chilled that of many years' growth. Constitutionally happy, and self-complacent, and possessing a large share of the suspicious virtues, such as prudence, caution, and great zeal for the church *as such*, he was never known to be especially denunciatory, except when expatiating upon the denunciatory spirit he could often see in others, particularly Mr. B——. The Superintendent had many difficulties to contend with; and finding that the influence of Deacon S—— had created a strong party feeling in the church, which had begun to relax the hearty co-operation of the teachers, he resigned.

Four years had now elapsed since the election of Mr. B——, and Mr. C—— was chosen to fill his place, wholly for his many amiable qualities. Having, as he thought, felt great embarrassment from his excessive sensitiveness and modesty, he declined. This characteristic

occasioned no serious inconvenience in other relations of life; but being waited upon by two or three committees from the school, it was finally confessed that he was opposed to "*lay preaching*;" and as he had never been accustomed to speaking in meeting or out of it, except on secular subjects, they all shortly after rejoiced that he did not accept the call. Six months without a Superintendent, had reduced the school to half its maximum attendance, and destroyed its usefulness. In this plight, they resolved to hold an election; and Mr. D—— being the most popular man in the church, on account of his wealth and exemption from all cliques, was elected. When waited upon, he consented to serve, on condition that he should not be expected to give his personal attendance often, but his *influence* could always be relied upon. The secretary, a fine young man, performed his own duties and those of the Superintendent, as well as he could; and the school went on quietly, having presently passed from the regard and pretty much from the recollection of the church generally. A few restless teachers, dissatisfied with the present state of things, resolved to have an election *annually*. A new constitution was adopted, and one of the teachers was the first choice.

A new interest was felt internally, which soon extended throughout the congregation. Within the past six years, they have had four different Superintendents, but the school has quadrupled, because all felt that evils were but temporary, and that real improvement was the order of progress.

Freely should we admit that modesty is one of the cardinal virtues; but where an individual stands in the way of the success of Christ's kingdom, it should as certainly yield in things spiritual and eternal as in things temporal. Yet where do we find delicacy, or personal respect and friendship, blocking the wheels, or hindering in any degree the success of business enterprises? Far be it from us to advocate the principle that good ends justify unfair means; but what we say is this: that provision should be made, at any and every sacrifice, for the success of measures best adapted to secure the end for which all religious organizations exist. Yet more forcibly do we feel compelled to add, that Christianity rejects and eschews all *ex-officio* memberships and rights, and patronage. As well might we speak of a patronage of *sunshine* as a patronage of religion.

It is not more certain that God overrules the denominational varieties and preferences of

his people, to the greatest prosperity of his kingdom, than it is, that, under a regulation which will promote the full development of peculiar characteristics, in endless progression, he secures the highest good of each individual. John and Paul, Melancthon and Luther, Whitefield and Wesley, Nettleton and Dwight, were all wanted for a purpose and a place, equally and harmoniously adapted. The facility of free and voluntary choice and change, which we here advocate, has been, in our country, successfully transferred to the State; and it will continue only so long as Christianity is sufficiently pure and vigorous to keep the power of party zeal subordinate to the paramount good of the whole country. Since the Christian era, no day has dawned upon earth so full of moral grandeur as that which succeeds our national election. The winds of party strife have rolled wave on wave, until the whole face of society is white with foaming fury. The voice uttered at the ballot-box has not only stilled the tempest, but, speaking in the unwritten majesty of public opinion, has called order from chaos, and inaugurated a revolution in a method of easy and unquestioned regularity, as serene and beautiful as the rising of the sun, on the morning of creation.

CHAPTER X.

SINGING.

“MUSIC, sweet music!” The pulse beats quicker, and imagination stirs her wings at the mention of the word. How gently blend our purest affections, with the remembrance of those consecrated hours, when a mother’s voice, divinely sweet, soothed the first anguish of our infant mind. Home, Father, Sister, Brother, are names lovingly spoken in the rhapsody of song. Along the walls of the earthly temple linger the notes of the spirit-kindling anthem, mingling ever and anon with the orchestra on high, singing “Glory to God” in the transports of sacred love,—the only response to the angel bands, delegated with glad tidings of peace and good will to man. Earth and heaven join in but one concert; and that is, a hymn of praise to Him who hath bought and redeemed us. And where is the spell of music not almost omnipotent? Hers is not only

the anointing oil that consecrates the memories of departed friendship, in our places of hallowed devotions; but in the festive hall she animates the elastic step, and transforms the field of gore to a field of glory.

“ The grammar rules instruct the tongue and pen,
Rhetoric teaches eloquence to men,
By logic we may learn to reason well,
But music hath charms beyond our power to tell.”

When the Saviour was on earth, children formed the only choir that aspired to chant his praise in “glad hosannas,” in the momentary but prophetic triumph of his earthly glory. Let the Sabbath School prolong the sound, until the whole earth shall echo back to heaven “in choral strains the swelling notes of joy.”

But, as we apprehend, there is little to be said and much to be unsaid about singing in the Sabbath School, or elsewhere, in the worship of God. Grant that every emotion of the soul has its appropriate expression in sound; and even that, aside from all sentiment, there is, *to the cultivated*, an intelligible language in music; we still object to it when the object is not to intensify emotion, created by

an intelligent conception of sentiment. Our theory of music is rather this: that, by addressing a sentiment agreeably and forcibly to the mind through the appealing sound, it does what eloquence essays to do, brings all the feelings into harmony with the sentiment held in its harmonious expression. While, then, we would have much singing in Sabbath School, we would have it simple, fit, and confined to a few subjects of paramount importance. We would have a sufficient variety of tunes (and generally the same words attached), to prevent any wearisome monotony; but not so many that they may not be known to all who have been in the school a year, and easily recollected and sung by every member. A little attention to the proper selection and practice of hymns, of which there are plenty, adapted to Sabbath School exercises, will do more to attach children to them and to benefit their souls, than twice the amount of labor anywhere else. We have frequently seen the most rude and riotous perfectly subdued, and even attached to the Sabbath School, by the singing of a single session. But singing, unless appropriate, is as potent in its centrifugal as in its centripetal forces. We have seen the same class

of boys perfectly uproarious and ungovernable, while the school have been singing a hymn, the words of which might be well enough, but the tune of which, having in it no melody, failed to catch the ear or the attention. Tunes the most valuable for the use of a cultivated congregation are often, and even generally, unfit for the Sunday School, where it is only wished to interest and profit the children. You might as well pour cold water upon the heads of the youth as to introduce Old Hundred, Mear, and Dundee into the Sabbath School; and we are mistaken if many adults do not partake of the same feelings, except as they are glad and happy to have the privilege of singing *anything* which they know. Almost everybody likes soul-stirring tunes; while peculiar tastes, and peculiar modes of feeling, require the gratification only to be found in the slow-moving chords and sublime and majestic tones of Old Hundred. Such, however, is the character of the music yet introduced into the Sabbath School in many parts of the country, where other and appropriate music can be easily obtained. We ought, however, by this time, to be as much surprised, if not provoked by it, as we should be to enter a Sabbath School and find

all the children covered with bonnets, hats, coats, and pantaloons of the same size their parents wear. We can but pity the children of a Sabbath School, when the superintendent and teachers permit them to be dismissed with the "Doxology in long meter." What is wanted is, light, moving airs, sung generally in not more than two parts, the bass and the air or soprano. If you want its teaching solemn, let it be plaintive and be it ever so slow, it will reach the heart of both young and old, and deepen the sentiment. We mean such as are sung to the tune,

"To-day the Saviour calls,"

or such as

"Dear Saviour, ere we part."

Of tunes of the other class, there are now so many admirably adapted to the Sabbath School that we may not specify. Allow us to say, in a word, however, that a book called "*Sabbath School Gems*," and the anniversary hymns published by the American Sunday School Union, and many of the best Methodist hymns, are of the class appropriate to the Sabbath School.

Perhaps something might be learned from a conversation, not wholly imaginary, between two Superintendents, one of a large Congregational School, and the other of a Mission School.

"How is it," inquired the first, "that, when I pass through the locality of your school, I hear the children in the streets singing 'The happy land,' 'All the week we spend,' &c.? When my own children volunteer singing at home, it is 'Old Dan Tucker,' or some negro melody."

"Why, sir," replied the other, "I suppose the leader of the choir, who, I understand, is one of your Sabbath School Teachers, sings tunes wholly selected from the ——— collection."

"Yes; but our children are taught the rudiments of music every Saturday, and ought to be able to sing such refined and elevated music."

"Doubtless they are able," was the response; "but your process of refining has vitiated, and, possibly nauseated their tastes."

"Do you teach your children the rudiments of music?"

"No. If we did, we should not sing other

tunes with them ; but we have more important lessons for the Sabbath School, and they will sing any tune they like, the second time they hear it, if not more difficult than it should be. I find it adds much to the interest of a hymn sometimes to stop and explain at large the subject of the verse we are about to sing ; and as I lead myself, though not understanding the rules of music as I wish I did, it gives me great advantage. I also insist upon their speaking the words together, and plainly, and by this means they learn the hymn quickly, and of course they will remember the sentiment. How often do you sing in your school ?”

“ Only once. We close always with singing, and have one hour’s session.”

“ That makes some difference then. We have two sessions, and sing at least once in the morning and three or four times in the afternoon. Our children like the exercise so well, that we are just about getting them together on the afternoon of Saturday, in each week, to teach them the rudiments of music. But what you have said about your children learning to sing vulgar songs instead of their Sabbath School hymns, will confine us to the

same kind of music we now sing in our Sabbath School."

"I have always sung bass, and cannot start a tune ; but I shall hereafter sing the air, and try to change a little the style of our music."

This subject recalls the glimmering of an indistinct, half-remembered reverie which on a clear, cold, February morning, stealthily found its way where the tempter would always fail, but for the very shadows he makes to play around his victim. The last feeling distinctly remembered was, that I was in a large house built for an organ. The presiding genius, of course, was the organist. Sometimes, indeed, he seemed startled, and his music was spasmodic ; but this I soon understood was for *effect*. Borne upward in "mid air," on the gentle undulations of his swelling preludes, there gleamed around me such forms of beauty as Heaven once poured upon the Apocalyptic vision of Patmos. Alcoves and corridors were faintly discernible through festoons of icicles, that gave prismatic beauty to every ray of light which stole through the painted windows. The audience below were *gracefully bending*, being composed by the speaking

melody of sound, and the magic charms of the divinest of the arts. Wings of angels were manifestly bearing around celestial messages ; for I heard one in the audience whisper to another, "How difficult those notes !" In stern response another answered, "Heaven forbid they should be possible here !" Overcome by the transporting scene, I heard a female voice sobbing aloud. Tears have thoughts in them, and I inquired the cause of her weeping, when she tried to say, "Such beauty !" "song !" and something else. I immediately spoke of the song of "Moses and the Lamb." "Beautiful lambs !" was her response, and I was dumb. I looked up and saw in golden letters, "Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord !" Hallucinations like these, partly imaginary and strangely real, came and went so swiftly that a minute seemed a day. As the organ discoursed in "operatic" strains, the church officers and some young people were unusually attentive below. I could not learn the reason, but had faint apprehensions that "*taste*" was thought of, but the creed of the church was one "pre-eminently spiritual." This thought was so groveling that it nearly broke the spell. A sharp twinge of conscience

is here distinctly recollected : "Sleep in church !" But here again in flowing cadence, the pastor's voice was so melodiously reverberating along the consecrated aisles, that I sank into yet deeper mists of unconsciousness. The more I tried to resist, the more swiftly flitted in grotesque rapidity distorted images before my disturbed mind, owing, undoubtedly, to some unusual fatigue from the previous exercises of the Sabbath School. I tried to forget the music ; when I clearly discovered that I had been worshipping God in the voice of a profane swearer, whom I had heard the day before cursing God and man in raging madness. His tones were now an octave lower, and "all in good taste." Then I thought I heard voices in Heaven, but they were on earth. The chorister, and another singer whom I did not know, were muttering complaints because the music committee compelled the choir to allow the congregation to join in the performance by singing one old tune on the afternoon of each Sabbath day ; and this, too, when Carpenter Smith, who sits underneath the gallery, was always known to sing half a note below the pitch. One of them declared that a soul had been converted by the power of their scientific

music when all other means had failed. A Puritanic brother, perceiving my head still reclined, suspected all was not right, and gently roused me in time to hear the "quartette" sweetly performing the "Baptismal Chant."

CHAPTER XI.

RELATION OF PARENTS TO THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

SECTION I.—*Religious Parents.*

THE objections that have been made to the Sabbath School, as a Ministry for Christ, have been such as not only to show their weakness, but to betray a jealousy lest there should be encroachment upon *prerogative*. The only one worthy of notice, however, is, that it interferes with family instruction. This, in some quarters, has been urged with an affected zeal for God's glory, which, where the motive was not understood, has given occasion for the assertion that there is not now so much family instruction as there was before the introduction of Sabbath Schools. The assertion we deny, and challenge the proof. Not an instance is known to the writer, from many years' observation; while contrary instances

have been multiplied a hundred-fold. Yet it must be admitted that this is a supposable case. That guilty indifference which even pious parents manifest to the eternal well-being of their offspring may, here as elsewhere, pervert the greatest of blessings to a means of unpardonable neglect. . The instances of home religious instruction were so much more rare then than now, that they were noticed as things extraordinary. The assembling of children by the Pastor for catechetical instruction, gave some prominence to the study of church catechisms at home ; and though it is beyond our province to prescribe duties to them, we claim forgiveness for suggesting whether the church in general would not be willing to forego some considerable part of pulpit preparation to secure a weekly gathering of the children connected with congregations. What labor so important or so hopeful as this, and how admirably would it supplement the Sabbath School, and scatter the religion of the Sabbath through the week, were this but universal !

We should here, however, repress our own emotions if we omitted to set forth some of those dangers which at the present time are threatening the character of the generation now

being educated in our Sabbath Schools. The popularity and generality of this mode of religious instruction, is making education more universal; but we fear, through the want of well-qualified teachers, it is far too superficial. Study, hard study, is not the present discipline of the mind or heart anywhere. The hard labor, dispensed with by the new patents, fails to present us the sturdy character of a youth educated under the old regime. The irrigation is wide, covering almost the entire surface of some communities; but the water is shallow, and the deposits not sufficiently enriched by the accumulated minerals of deep and distant earths. Thus, under the very meridian of Christianity may be seen, ever-growing and strengthening, the most gigantic forms of oppression that blacken the page of savage history. The inconsistencies of professors of religion burst through the fair surface of society, as the volcano shoots its breath of brimstone above the ocean wave. At our communion table may be found Christian editors, who wield the most powerful of all influences for the weal or woe of the nation, feebly hinting that here and there is a church of real Christians, but reporting fully the fulminations

of error and the incidents of "cricket matches" and horse races, and urging the masses to the theater and other places of sinful amusement, as if their own salvation depended upon the outdoing of the treachery of Judas. And *Christian* publishers of "yellow-covered literature" fill the atmosphere of the community with a moral miasma breeding pestilence and death to the soul, their only question being, "What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?" This want of conscientiousness is suffered to stain the page of history by pouring contempt upon the character of the Puritans, and to desecrate the pulpit by satirizing some of the best specimens of Christianity. In humbler life it ramifies the church, exhibits itself in the diluted morals of families professing religion, in the most deadly of all symptoms, a vitiated appetite for amusements, and in the maxims, not to say morals, of trade; and yet more alarmingly in the slight experiences of those who present themselves as candidates for church membership. Unable to "give a reason of the hope that is in them," what experience they have must be drawn out by leading questions; and even then you cannot get it. True, the healthful child cannot

be expected as the offspring of sickly parentage ; but the issues are so momentous that those symptoms should alarm us, for the vitality of the constitution is in danger.

If we are not to expect that outward changes are to be so great, where the character has been so shaped to the conformations of religious society, we are not the less to look for it to be experimental and radical. Instead of being dumb to severe questioning, we should expect the candidate to be delighted with pungent searching inquiries. When a disposition is manifested to cling to worldly and forbidden pleasures, it should be taken, as it really is, as a sad evidence of a counterfeit. Compromise, in such a case is wholly inadmissible, involving, on the part of the church which receives such, a recreancy to her sacred trust.

Christian parent ! it may be of little importance for you to know by whom or how your child is learning the rules of grammar or rhetoric ; but is it a matter of indifference for you to know by whom and how your child is learning the language and cherishing the emotions that are to be felt and spoken to all eternity ? But what, at this moment, is interesting you

the most,—the development of that intellect which is to meet its reward in a smile or frown of your fellow-man, in the pride of an hour ; or the waking of those affections which are to last for ever in the complacent joy of a God of love ?*

In the sacred bosom of the family you have nourished these dear children, carefully and tenderly. The hour when they shall pass over the threshold of your door to meet the counter-currents, swiftly wheeling in every direction, is waited for with fearful forebodings. The bright visions of future happiness woven over the cradle, have been receiving fresh promises, as your smiles have waked one susceptibility after another, into joyous activity. But now comes a crisis. Is this treasure to be thrown upon the turbid wave to sink or swim around the shoal of sharks, waiting to devour it ? or can it make its first plunge into the outward world, to meet congenial smiles that shall still point it in the way of purity and peace ? The Sabbath School, thrice blessed Christian parent ! here meets a want which you now feel to be indispensable. Under a

* 1 Cor. xiii. 8 : "Whether there be knowledge, it shall fail," &c.

variety that entirely relieves the monotony of home, you have the very next stage of moral culture ready, every way prepared to greet you and the object of your affection.

The infant voice and the youthful glow are here borne upward in the choral song of gladness and praise. Every seed you have dropped into the hopeful soil of your little ones, here receives additional nourishment; and every moral sentiment a manifold indorsement. The eye, the ear, the voice, and the very sympathies of being, are once more in harmonious training for the severer trials of the strengthening faculties, as they here await an entrance upon the conflict of life in earnest. What parent that has received the aid and witnessed the effect of this introduction into the Sabbath School, would name a price or estimate any sacrifice for such a privilege? What can be substituted for it, this side cherubic bliss in heaven? Exhortation here would be trifling with the most sacred feelings of a parent. To question your appreciation, to speak of adaptation, or to praise the system, would be offering an insult to your understanding. We reserve all this for those who have not tried it, and for the parent that has not felt the need of help, or yet a desire to

train his children for happiness and heaven, if there can be such a one.

We cannot, however, part from this interview with our dear Christian friends, without asking you a few questions, which we hope may receive an affirmative answer. Are you well acquainted with the Christian teacher of your dear girl or boy? Did you seek an interview at the last visit of the teacher, and was it precious to kindle your affection for each other, as you spoke together of the spiritual interests of your children? Did you give any hints to guide the teacher in the next Sabbath day's lessons, and show that you knew well what they were? In your prayer together for the object of your mutual love, did your common infirmities and weaknesses bind you stronger to the source of your strength? Was there an emotion of gratitude, mingled with faith, that these joint labors would issue in the glory of God, in the salvation of those immortal souls, now seemingly poised for eternity on the faithful discharge of present duty? If not last Sabbath at the school, are you so often there that you know just how to co-operate with the general as well as the particular exercises of the school? Is it *your* school, more literally,

a thousand times more significantly, than that where your child is taught the rudiments of the knowledge that passeth away? Though next to this, that should be the place of your watchful and tenderest regard.

SECTION II.—*The Relation of non-professing Parents to the Sabbath School.*

Here we are bound to presume you are sincere in your profession not to be identified in any way with Christ or his kingdom. Whatever the cause may be, we pause not here to ask it. You now reject the only plan of saving sinners, to which much if any credence has been given, in the whole history of the race. Keen, reasoning, foreseeing, and sagacious in avoiding risk and danger, you deliberately refuse any and every connection with any system or theory that may involve a hope of your eternal happiness. Equally conscious are you that the spell which holds in it a vague uncertainty (for this may be as far as you advance in morals), will not be broken. Notwithstanding all this, there is a strong probability that you will soon consign the reasoning, feel-

ing part of your existence to eternal flames. There is no terror in the idea, for others are doing it, and any contrary course may involve a moment's disagreeable (if you please) repentance and preparation. If you quarrel with my plainness, God has stated the case much more plainly,—not only so that you can understand it, but so that you cannot misunderstand it. While you would not risk for your children the loss of a dollar in a title deed, you risk immortality without consulting a lawyer. Not an object addresses your eye, your ear, your touch, your every sensibility, but corroborates the word of God. Even without it, there are warnings enough, were you rationally awake to them.* But a numbness has seized your soul, and you defy God to marshal terrors enough before your mind to disturb your guilty indifference, or to rob the slightest fancy of your imagination of a power to continue the fatal delusion. Morally demented as you now are, there are yet some elements of your moral being, which have survived the wreck of the fall, and the general perversion of your noble faculties. These you hold in common with the

* Rom. i. 28: "For the invisible things," &c.

unintelligent animal creation, with a slight foreboding of an immortal duration, which no love of sin has been able entirely to eradicate. To these last attributes of your being, we now appeal in behalf of your children. *You love them.* For their personal happiness, you are willing to forego some daily indulgence. Though dead, as we must consistently suppose you to be, to your own future well-being, we will not, we cannot presume you to be totally indifferent to theirs. You have been an unwilling but forced witness to the corruption of their natures, through you begotten. Hitherto you may not have plucked up a single root of those seeds that you have seen shooting through every fiber of their being. Or, if you have tried and failed, you have not sought strength where it can alone be found, or thought of removing the all-powerful influence of your own example. Possibly you have spoken, but your actions have given your own words the lie, and your silence, could you have preserved it, would have been better. We meet you now with the Sabbath School for your child, not to answer your cavils, but to supply your felt want of some aid in training your loved one for success here and happiness hereafter. We say success here; for already your penetrating

reason, running along the line of cause and effect, has discerned the relation between folly and defeat, sin and suffering, vice and shame, disease and death. You have seen, too, that your attempt to insert some general principles of morals into the rotten trunk, was like ingrafting the scion in an icicle; there was no hope of its growth, much less of its fruit. In your discouragement, we come to you, and offer you a theory of teaching every way adapted to secure your child's obedience to your authority, his present prosperity and his eternal happiness, by a change of heart through the power of the Holy Ghost. With your co-operation, this may be done; without it, such a thing is hardly possible. You may withhold it from us, and from all religious influences, and make its damnation as sure as your own. This you cannot, as we have before supposed, desire. Let him go with us, then, to the Sabbath School; nay, bring him yourself, and place him there. True, his teacher will be an imperfect one; but the truth which he will there be taught, and the book out of which his lessons will be given, are able to make him wise unto salvation.* Will you let him come? On the *yes* or *no* of

* 2 Tim. iii. 15.

this question his eternal destiny may be, probably is, suspended. As you have observed a slight cause to affect the development of this or that element of his being, perhaps a mote to arouse his angry passions, and fill him with the keenest anguish, or perchance a smile to thrill him with ecstasies of joy; and then, by your powers of reasoning, you have prefigured their completeness in heaven or hell, as there eternized,—so now, a word of two or three letters may determine forever the happiness or misery of your much-loved child. Once more we say, let him come. “Whosoever will, let him come.” And “Let him that heareth, say, Come.”

CHAPTER XII.

CLASSES.

THE careful reader has not failed to observe that we present the Sabbath School system as capable of adaptation to all ages and conditions of human society. If any, through habit or prejudice, have conceived here a fitness only for the instruction and edification of youth, we beg such to read again, until they shall discern in it a flexibility rendering it commensurate with the wants of the race. Were this not *in it*, then it would not be a fit vehicle of the Bible, whose truths are revealed and exactly adapted to meet, at every point, the moral wants of man. True, we are describing organisms, not man in his individual capacity. Here, indeed, we could behold the creature man as the "noblest work of God," in yet higher dignity than when we contemplate him by associations. Looking at him, in his primeval purity and greatness, as he stood forth

in the morning of creation, he is pictured to our present vision in the surrounding splendors of his abode, that then seemed to be without partition from heaven. In the mournful ruins of the fall, if we still discern the infinitude of his relations, he is an object of yet greater interest. Were the whole universe of God created for the exhibition and the happiness of one such being, there would be nowhere a single element that could be dispensed with; nowhere a superfluity. A world like this is the only fit place for him—a Saviour like ours a necessary provision. But almighty wisdom and goodness have not only made it complete for all, but the *more complete* for *every one*, by the infinite multiplication of individuals.

Our interest, therefore, should not be diminished by the sight of numbers, which seem, like insects, to swarm in the atmosphere. But, by appreciating the value of each one, we should strive to impress ourselves intelligently with the priceless value of a group, whether large or small, old or young. It is only because the condition of the young is a more hopeful one, that we can see the least propriety in limiting this institution to the youth of this or any other country. But if we examine

closely, and by the light of revelation, we shall discern that this is an additional reason for extending it to adult age, with yet more strenuous effort, to bring every such within its influence. Is he a Christian? Then he will feel it to be no work of supererogation, no superfluous privilege, to sit down here in the Sabbath School class, with the Bible in hand, and converse over those themes that now enlist his warmest affections, and are to be the source of exhaustless pleasure to all eternity. Here you will learn that, just in proportion as you become familiar with these truths, will their value increase; and your pleasure will be in compound ratio, until the Sabbath School class shall be the happiest place this side of heaven. Here you come more individually into contact with these truths as you now study them, and commune with others, whose hearts are glowing with the same emotions. Thus the Sabbath School class will be like uniting firebrands, every additional one will increase the common flame.

Are you, by your own confession, no follower of Christ? then are you, of necessity, a professed enemy. "He that is not with me is against me," says Christ. And is the Sabbath

School no place for you, because you are in middle life or an old man? Pause here a moment, we beseech you, by the shortness of time left for preparation, and see whether here is not your last hope. Take care that this does not slip from your hold ere you grasp the offered scepter. Have you passed the season of youth here, and has that favored season gone by, and left you without a hope in Christ? Truly, then, there is occasion for alarm. Have the most solemn appeals from the pulpit fallen upon your ear unheeded, year after year?—then your case is almost hopeless. Have God's providences warned you in vain, or shaken you with his fearful and terrific thunders? Then, perhaps, the Holy Ghost may have taken his departure. But if there is yet a ray of hope left for you, may it not finally gleam on that Bible that lies by your side? Take it up and read it. Wend your way to the Sabbath School, and seat yourself where you cannot escape the individual appeal of a faithful teacher. You may be now interested. But if you are not, if you place yourself among the inquirers here, is there not as much hope as anywhere else, since you will find some one who will sympathize with you, and speak to you

individually, so that you may no longer resist God's spirit, and parry off the shafts of divine light, which would penetrate your soul. Here, too, you will be encouraged by the contact of others in the same relation with yourself, and the near approach and familiar converse of one who is endeavoring to enlighten you in the path of duty. This may be the last experiment of God to save you. This neglected, your doom may be inevitable. This embraced, and though temptation still press, the power may be broken. Sins like scarlet may possibly yet be washed away in atoning blood.

Reader, are you a teacher in an adult class? To day you are pleading with one who to-morrow may be beyond your reach. This case, in the calendar of heaven, is about ready for trial. Are you ready for the issue? The Judge is approaching. Lo, he comes!

SECTION I.—*Bible Classes.*

We use this term, not because we like it, or because there is any meaning in it; but because it is generally understood to relate to classes composed of youth or adults. All who

can read, and who are not in the infant class, are, of course, in *Bible Classes*. That the flattering term retains youth longer in school, we do not believe; but, on the contrary, it is a sort of door, inviting the scholars generally into it; and when there, they graduate early; for the impression is common that the world is the next step before them. Those left behind are *children*. Other designations may be given, and elevations predicated, less liable to objection. The Sabbath Schools of New England present a delightful contrast of ages, nearly all the members of the church and many of the congregation being there, either in the capacity of teachers or learners. Would you answer forever that standing question, "*How shall we retain our youth* under religious influences through the most critical period of life?" You can do it in no way so well as by example. Once let your children see that it is regarded as a proper place for adults, and there will not be so much difficulty in retaining them here as in the church; and possibly one of the most fatal delusions would be measurably dissipated, viz., *that religion is for old people, ministers, or children, not for the prime or vigor of life*. Do you still ask, "Should there not be a

different course of lessons for mature minds? Would you have all classes in the same school study the same lessons, and use the same question book?" We answer, "Yes." The Bible is like the key-note of the musical scale: any one truth will answer to the note, which denotes a sound. Starting from it, you may ascend, octave on octave, until you are lost amid the splendors of God's natural and moral universe. Have you keyed too high for children? It is the glory of Revelation, that, descending the scale to the simplest announcement of any of its truths, nothing is lost, but much often is gained. The most interesting, important, and sublime truths not only lie upon the surface; but a child may comprehend them.

Yet again, would it not be well sometimes to study the Bible topically and theologically? Undoubtedly; and the ingenious teacher will have the narrative before him, and conduct the inquiries up and down the entire range of revelation. It makes but little difference from what point he starts. But has not the teachers' meeting prescribed the track in which all should go? No; it was only the way in which all *may* go; and every truth contemplated

there forms a part of the whole; but both teacher and pupil should feel at perfect liberty to range where they please. Care, indeed, should be taken that all the class are prepared to answer the questions on the lessons of the day. Then, when the Superintendent questions the school, it will not appear, to their shame, that they know nothing about the simplest truths of the day's lesson.

Adult classes will gain more than they will lose by occupying seats in the school room. They will be interested in the general exercises of the school. The religious enterprise, the variety, and the cheerful atmosphere around them, will help rather than impede their progress. And, if they wish to pursue a separate course of study (which should rarely or never be the case), these things will be no detriment, provided sufficient time is appropriated to the sessions of the school.

At this point, let us observe the wisdom of God, in the media and method of revelation. What stretch of imagination can conceive their excellence and beauty? The Book of God, like the Book of Nature, lies before us in corresponding sweetness and harmony. Do we roam over the limitless fields of his natural

productions, what new forms of beauty catch the eye, at every glance upon the earth around us! or what wonders above transfix the enraptured gaze! But, not amid the rapt adoration of such a vision, do we feel the most of "God with us." Plant, tree, flower, landscape, or the host of heaven, has no language so sweet as that which falls from the lips of him who "spake as never man spake." When we listen to the history of creation, all other histories are forbidden to speak. When we read the story of Joseph, let Scott and Dickens cover their faces. What is the friendship of Damon and Pythias to that of Jonathan and David? When Job and his friends speak in allegory, let Bunyan be still. When David and Isaiah sing, Homer and Milton must listen. When our God is revealed perpetual sackcloth becometh the race that heathen mythology in works or ways, should be possible. Should any tragedy be written after the scene of Calvary? any poetry after that of the Apocalypse? But we arrest this digression; for by these comparisons we are nearing profanity.

Doubtless there are some advantages in separate classes, and we propose to speak of them in the next section.

SECTION II.—*Block Schools.*

In cities or villages where there is a teacher of peculiar adaptation, or where any number of individuals or families choose to associate themselves for the study of the Bible, or where there is one in the block or square, who is unwilling to meet his neighbors in the judgment without a previous interview on earth, there can be no objection to all sitting down over the Bible and studying it together. The public exercises of singing and questioning, and the charming variety of the Sabbath School room, will not be found; but here may germinate every social and Christian virtue. The meeting will naturally partake of the character of a lecture, unless the leader is peculiarly gifted in eliciting conversation, and then it may run into a conference meeting. But neither of these secures the object in view, which is the *social study of the Bible*. Profitably and agreeably conducted and continued, this will dry up one of the worst miasms of village or city life, by promoting a common sympathy recognized in the Bible.* Another advantage

* See Good Samaritan, Luke x. 30. Martha and Mary,—John Chap. xi.

of this arrangement is the time gained for the investigation of single subjects.

The following plan was adopted with great success by a class engaged in the chronological study of Bible history: The Teacher, having previously given to each member of the class some scene in the book of Acts, with its locality, in regular order, the pupils at the time appointed assembled, and having had the advantages of "Townsend's Chronological Arrangement of the Bible," were, for the most part, prepared for the recitation; and a most interesting one it was. As the Teacher pointed to the map of Asia Minor hanging on the wall, each one was ready to say what transpired at the several places, as he passed from one to another, until the scene closed up with the journeyings and incidents of the life of Paul. The interest was not only sustained, but carried forward, increasing at every step, until it became an effort to repress the bursting admiration. The recitations were chiefly in Scripture language, which could be easily remembered in such connections. A few young men, or a few young ladies, might not only delight and instruct the block or neighborhood in which they live, but perhaps the whole parish, with such recitations.

It is an occasion of thankfulness that, in almost every block in our American cities, there are to be found those who would be willing to open their parlors for such gatherings; but it is yet to be lamented that, from the neglect of self-culture, there are so few that are willing and competent to conduct such meetings.

As many of the ordinary exercises of the Sabbath School as can be profitably sustained, may be introduced into these classes. Here, too, when some one imbued with the Gospel spirit, has collected the materials for such a class, the election or selection of a teacher may be safely left to the members of it. This course, we would also suggest as proper for any class of learners of the age of eighteen or twenty years.

SECTION III.—*Household or Family Schools.*

The first and oldest institution in our world is the *Family*. Nor unless, indeed, we should except *sacrificial worship*, do we hear of any other until after the Deluge. We see what estimate God put upon it from the circum-

stances of its origin,* and its long continuance as the only social institution. As we contemplate the rich inventory of blessings which center here, how shall we avoid the conclusion that God intended by it to prevent all the sad consequences of the fall, and restore to his creatures the lost happiness of Paradise? We can neither enumerate nor survey them; but we pity the man for whom this is necessary. The post-diluvian remedial expedients of *state*, of *priest*, of *king*, however, became necessary not only to complete the exhibition of God's persevering grace, but as a means in his hand for conducting us back to our pristine purity and glory. Christ, our second Adam,† has taken the place of all intermediates, which were only used through the Mosaic dispensation, to evolve the idea of a sacrifice for sin and of spiritual purity; and he shall become as perfectly our King as he is now our Priest. The family may be the last as it was the first and only institution necessary to restore the lost image of God upon all the workmanship of his hands.

The design of religion, so far as it relates to the family, is to make it the school of all

* Gen. ii. 21—24.

† 1 Cor. xv. : 45.

excellence. Every element which composes it would seem to typify the family above. And if, to the fullest extent, these resources were improved, what joy there but is foretasted here? As the father was the minister in the antediluvian age, so he should be under the Christian dispensation. His official functions have never been suspended or repealed. Other and extensive ministrations may, without limitation, come to his aid, but none can discharge his obligation here. Incompetency or inadequacy for the discharge of these duties, will not be good excuses at the tribunal of the last great day; for He before whom we shall appear, has placed within our reach the means of improvement, and attached promises of success to faithfulness, which should move us to do his bidding here as the "chief end" of our being. Profusely as Heaven's bounty has scattered around us those Gospel institutions, which convey to us the priceless blessings of Christian fellowship, union, and activity, they will become permanent and progressive only as they raise the moral thermometer "at home." Perhaps we should rather say, only as the fountains of spiritual life open, and pour out their streams, will the rivers which

they form be lost in the ocean of universal good.

Although prescriptions for family routine of reading, devotion, and improvement are so contiguous to the subject before us as to touch at many points, they all lie beyond the limits of our immediate object. We feel at liberty to penetrate this sanctuary only so far as the distinctive features of the Sabbath School organization are to be recognized. This may be in the weekly catechetical class, or in a lesson regularly pursued, and conducted by the head, or social head of the family. And here again we repeat, that just as much of the singing, questioning, and other exercises of the Sabbath School room as can be sustained, may be profitably introduced. Here will be extremes of age and capacity that may require the same variety, change, and adaptation. The lessons, too, may be the same in kind and length; and the same preparation, and the same method of conducting the investigation, may be adopted. The Sabbath evening may be profitably spent in this way. And where any of the family attend the Sabbath School this will be a good time for parents and children together to study the lesson for the next

succeeding Sabbath. Or, if the advantages of more public organizations are not enjoyed, then several times a day may these exercises be introduced, on the Sabbath, with pleasure and profit to all. And what parent that believes in the immortality of the soul, or, in short, in any of the truths of the Bible, can neglect to assemble around him his household in this interesting and tender relation? And what phase can the disease of sin assume that will not yield to the systematic treatment of such a *Family Bible Class*?

Here, as elsewhere, we shall not assume to give any system of teaching; but the earnest inquirer will find helps all around him, every way calculated to assist in the performance of his duty. As we have referred to some books that may be profitably consulted by those who attempt to teach, so here we refer to the system of lessons on the "*Shorter Catechism*,"* used in Scotland, called the "*Gall System*;" which, though prepared for the Shorter Catechism, may be equally adapted to any other. For the general study of the Bible lessons, all question books and Biblical dictionaries are

* See "*End and Essence*," before referred to.

well adapted, and are now so easy of access as to find a place in every household.

Into this class all the family should be gathered. Questions may be adapted to the youngest (who will generally be found the happiest), and to the oldest they will have no less freshness and interest because of their simplicity and familiarity. The practice of excusing Catholic or infidel servants, or any other who may not wish to come to family devotions, is inadmissible here. The justly popular doctrine of religious freedom, does not extend to the household, or at least to such an exception from conformity to its regulations, as involves the head of the family in disgrace. This would introduce a confusion fatal to any system of law or government. The children would be taught disrespect for parental authority, and God's requisite of the domestic economy would be palpably infringed. Dereliction of duty here involves consequences that would render every law upon the statute book a nullity. Subordination here is fundamental to authority anywhere else. Do you ask whether, if my conscientious but dependent sister or child were in the family of the Catholic, I would have her subjected to the test of idolatry or

dismissal, at the risk of starving? Certainly, for we will not shun this extreme hypothesis; and we should endeavor so to teach and train our children that they will gladly choose the latter alternative. We extend the same liberty to others, and to all households. But where the Bible is the rule of conduct, this extremity will rarely if ever occur. Frequent as refusals may be, there is no self-denying and persevering effort made to remove objections. Request is met with refusal, command with contempt, passion sometimes opposed or compromised with equal passion, which results in non-intercourse or conventional silence upon religion as an interdicted subject; and the consequences follow. Yet, the very consistency of insubordination here is the strongest ground for future hope that the conscientious parent can indulge, in reference to the result of his own training. It is only when these teachings are hardened into principles that they become of value in the keeping of a good conscience in the sight of God and all men. Where, then, is to be the issue? Just where, we regret to say, the Catholic parent is often found to be the most faithful? We are to risk truth with error. Providence has not placed any one

beyond the reach of temptations. On every side they meet the senses, and have to be met by protests within us that are more frequent than the pulsations of the heart. The Christian life is the growth of emotions, nourished and hardened by this process that is going on within and around us. When the memory shall perfectly recall the acts of the conscience, they will be found to be but little less numerous than the acts of the will. In reference to the subject before us, what are its promptings, as enlightened by the Bible? Nothing less than this: That he who would conduct the affairs of his own household in the fear of God, should be willing to take time at *any sacrifice*, if here such a word is admissible, to sit down kindly and patiently, and, little by little, enlighten the understanding, which has been darkened both by education and sin. It is not because error is stronger than truth, nor yet because there are not in every human bosom susceptibilities that cannot, will not yield to the touches of sympathy and love. But it is because we are not willing to take the slow pride-humbling course that Christ has prescribed, as the only one to discipline ourselves and bring others to the same self-abasement

before him. If we were prepared to labor humbly, perseveringly, and wisely, because we loved others as Christ has loved us, few indeed would be the refusals to join these family regulations, at once so pleasant and profitable. A love like Christ's, manifest here, could not but be penetrating, and would soon be felt extensively where most religious influences are now wanting. These warm streams of family affection would soon begin to thaw the cold, icy pillars of sin and superstition that now sustain the ponderous structures of the power of darkness. The partition between the Protestant and Catholic community would fall like the walls of Jericho, before a power like this, and the Catholic priest might be reached and instructed by expositions of the Bible uttered by your lips, and borne to the confessional as a message from heaven to him to "go and do likewise."

CHAPTER XIII.

BOOKS AND LIBRARIES.

"First unadorned and nobly plain, the manly Doric rose ;
Ionic next, with decent matron grace her airy pillars heaved ;
Luxuriant, last, the rich Corinthian waved her wanton wreath."

THE library is to the Sabbath School what the key-stone is to the arch. Perhaps after what the reader has already seen, it may be superfluous for us to confess our incompetency to treat of such a subject as this. Nothing but a conviction that the education of Protestantism, has been, to a great extent, limited to its mere doctrinal forms, could have overcome our reluctance to enter upon it. The day is not distant when the active development of the moral feelings will be the study of every Christian,—a study that shall reward mankind with a harvest of blessings infinite in extent, surpassing and embosoming mental and physical sciences, as the sunlight infolds the luster of the stars.

No careful observer has failed to see that the first fruits of a general resurrection are already visible. The evolution of moral forces in the Sabbath School has just assumed order enough to foreshadow coming events. As yet it is, indeed, but a distant hurtling of the masses confusedly rushing and wheeling into line. But more and more is this force to be apparent and influential, in the domain of literature, as well as in that of strictly religious and social arrangements. If our hopes of the future are not too confident, the coming Shakespeares shall kindle their resplendent fires by a spark from off the altar of heaven, and their plays shall be written for the real theater of life, rather than that which their glowing genius has epitomized for the shades of "Drury Lane." Would that we could say with equal confidence that the Sherwoods had written their last Sabbath School novels. Satan's millennium was broken by the Reformation; and the sharp conflicts that have since made to his dominion some reprisals, have cost him the strength of his legions. No Dante will again dramatize Purgatory, and no future Walter Scott constrain the love of the world by the inimitable charm that he has made to play

around the castles of feudal greatness without a clear recognition of the more perfect "heroes" furnished by the followers of the cross. Genius has not only been compelled to desert the standard of the adversary, but is now seen crouching in the outer courts of Christianity. True, she is ready enough to gratify the passion of the world; and she triumphantly tells it that real religion is very scarce. But she has to avert her eye from the license which she so long has praised, and acknowledge that, in her temple, there is a God. Charles Dickens drifts irresistibly into the realm of Christian humanities, and does not dare, like some others, to assume all Christianity to be a fiction. And though as yet he writes of these as if they had their springs in natural sources, and hears not the teachings of the sermon on the mount, others who follow him will recognize Christianity as the root of all goodness and moral progress in the earth. The age which is formed by Sunday Schools will in the end compel this.

If Newton, Wilberforce, and Hannah More, found their lamps burn brighter when lighted at the altar of Christianity, will the authors of the Future remain "blind leaders of the blind"

in the coming day when their followers will be few? The world saw in Cromwell's day a Christian government. The United States has now such an exemplification of it that all which is wanted is a people thoroughly Christian to carry it out. As surely as all license had a "restoration" in Charles II., Christianity shall have a "restoration" in the revival of Puritanism. All governments that do not enthrone this Christian idea are *doomed shams*, and will fade away like knighthood, in the light of an open Bible.

From this height of demand and expectation we exclaim to the Sabbath School world, arrest *instantly* the uncounted legions of homœopathic quacks, that are ministering infinitesimal doses of Christianity dissolved in immeasurable rivers of fiction, through your library books. Yes, we say, stop them! For it appears to us that "total abstinence" from this monstrous parody of religious instruction, is the only doctrine that can now rise to the dignity of expediency.

So general has become the intoxication from religious fiction, that we are in more danger of dying in the hands of our physicians than we were of being slain by the fiercest blows of

infidels. Genuine religion is in more danger at this hour from the faint, indiscreet praise of its real friends than from all its foes combined. If there had been a universal conspiracy to save the good cause by betraying it to its enemies, it could not have been more effectively done than by taking the blessed Gospel and so binding it in the cerements of religious fiction, that we can only recognize here and there a distorted feature. Before the child is permitted to take any nourishing food, its appetite is completely vitiated with sugar-plums and sweetmeats,—with a class of maudlin or sentimental books, called “religious fiction,” frivolous, yet stimulating,—the very effect of the reading of which is to educate him into a love of the fiction and a loathing of the religion.

While, on the defensible ground of evident expediency, we demand a “total abstinence” from all that is fictitious, let not our well-meaning religious novelists lay down their pens or quit their studies. Far be it from our intention to put iron fetters upon an age so hopeful for its very activities. If we read aright the Bible, facts clearly indicate a *professorship* for them, and the age at this moment waits for them to take the chair. Our era of literature

demands that many things be done and wisely done, as well as that many abuses be corrected. And there is a vast field spread out before those who have heretofore treated religious truth most familiarly under the garb of fiction, although concerning such fiction we say, until the fearful crisis of literary intoxication be passed and a healthful, sound mind be restored, "touch not, taste not, handle not."

There may be said to be three classes of fictitious writers in our day. Possibly, we should admit that the worst exhibit the attributes of real genius, and that, if their productions were decent, the good might innocently admire them. Those they ruin are the larger and gayer insects that flutter around their fatal blaze, and then expire in the bosom of the deceptive but brilliant flame. The next is a class of "Reformers," who, as we have before intimated, accept, to a certain extent, the premises of Christianity, and speak rapturously of the beauty of our temple, but who carefully conceal, if they do not systematically and purposely exclude, its presiding genius, "Jesus Christ of Nazareth." The third are only innocent in proportion to their weakness, and are not to be treated with extreme measures simply because they have not succeeded. While we

cheerfully accord to them a good motive, it would seem to have been their endeavor to ascertain how little religion their sick patients would endure, and then to administer a little less. Many have so far accomplished this, that one is almost ready to concede, that while the loss they have caused to morals and the kingdom of Christ can hardly be overrated, there has been considerable compensation in the mental discipline their books afford the rising generation. Our adroit youths, trained in this school of artifice, come to regard pious people as ridiculous and fanatical, if not positively loathsome, and to treat religious authors as spiritual trappers about the purlieus of the church. Tempted by the ingenuity with which the bait is laid, they love to saunter here sometimes, for they gain a practiced skill in leaping and shunning all the points of moral or religious teaching in the books—in skimming the story, and keeping wholly clear of its moral—which would do no discredit to the most practiced diplomatist. Yet, as we have said, all fictitious exhibitions of the truth of the Gospel—fictitious in their forms, but sincere and real in their inward meaning, are not necessarily to be abjured.

The teaching of nature is not so obscure but

that we can learn from *her* many just rules of religious criticism, as well as erect under her guidance a true standard of art. If the God of nature be admitted to have spoken to us *directly* in the revelation of his will, our first impression would be that the *manner* would be as complete and authoritative as the *matter*. Ye men of God-made genius, and all ye who light your torches at the flame of revelation, which glows and burns on the pages of inspired truth, we claim the right to demand of you a trial by the standard you recognize as divine, and a just conformity to that standard. True, the Bible does not assume to be a system of moral and intellectual philosophy; but were we able to master perfectly what it has revealed, we should find the usual standards of criticism as far below it as the clouds that linger beneath the Alpine heights are below their blazing summits. Rising from its perfect adaptation to the wants of the lowest specimen of humanity to an Apocalyptic altitude which the ken of Gabriel cannot reach, we venture the assumption that, intellectually as well as morally, you are bound to keep within the limitation of the Infinite Word, and not attempt to rise above it. You do worse than tax your

imagination to no purpose, when you try to weave visions of happiness which the Bible does not warrant. More closely than the light and the air does the atmosphere of revelation envelop us ; and not so delicately do they touch us every moment and at every period of our existence, as the munificent provisions of Heaven revealed in the Scriptures, press their acceptance upon every right desire. Let us glance at the Bible, then, and strive to ascertain whither this heavenly index points our way in the domain of literary effort and attainment. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Before the withering curse of sin had exerted its terrible power upon the mental and moral being of man, he doubtless easily understood such simple and sublime annunciations of heavenly truth. In the midnight of his darkness, fables and symbols were employed to conduct him back to his pristine glory. May it be our endeavor for a moment to ascertain where these had their beginning, and where they should have their end. If we fail in this attempt, let no one presume there is no Bible standard, but look again and again ; for, as we have hinted, we cannot be left in total darkness on a theme so important as this. So

far as we may be able to discern any part of it, and to prove its genuineness, we have a right to ask all reverently to bow to this authority.

The age of Fable has so thoroughly passed away, that we need spend no time in showing its utter want of harmony with the Christian system, its entire incapacity to be made subservient to the upbuilding of the kingdom of God in the soul. Although twice recognized in the Bible, once, Judges, ix. 8-15; and again, 2 Kings, xiv. 9, it may not be inappropriate to note that, in neither instance, was the reference made by inspired men. At no time has this low method of teaching risen above the teaching of the second table of the law; and just where we might expect, from its very nature, has the Bible left it. Not so with parabolic teaching. The Scriptures clearly recognize this, within certain limits, as suited to all ages; for we hold the Bible to be, from beginning to end, no mere syllabus of past, present, or future history, but a perfect teacher, by history and the just elucidation of its principles, adapted to all time. It is just for this reason, as we believe, that the Bible has recognized and retained this method of teaching; that, by placing its parables on record, we might,

through them, learn the just relation of truth to all that it concerns us to know, while in a state of trial. It may not be unworthy of remark, that almost all the parables of Scripture are employed to set forth spiritual truths, by earthly relations, thereby carrying the mind up to a just apprehension of the heavenly. From the frequency of their use, we are bound to infer that this is the happiest and most forcible way of educating our earth-born minds; for so general was this method of Christ's teaching that it is said, "And without a parable spake he not unto them."

While the things temporal and seen are thus made stepping-stones to the invisible and eternal, permit us to say, with emphasis, that the parable "never violates nature or the constitution of things," as God has made it, but takes it just as it is, and from it and by the aid of it, opens up the "great Unseen." The Saviour honored his own works in this, that, just as the world came from his hand, he found ample materials in it to furnish illustrations of divine truth. The water, the darkness, the rivers, the lilies, the thorns, the briars, seed, floods, rain, dew, the stars, birds, shepherd, sheep, goats, dogs, man in his various dealings

and relations to his fellow, husband and wife, birth, childhood, sicknesses, lepers, blindness, deafness, lameness, and even death itself, are all made tributary by him to the illustration and the enforcement of this truth; for the very dissolution of the body is taken by him as but a parable of the death of the soul.

“An allegory is a *prolonged parable*, carrying along an outward story, not violating the strict and truthful order of nature, but at the same time carrying along an inner and spiritual meaning, step by step, two parallel lines running along equally, as in *Pilgrim's Progress*. The parable of the Prodigal Son is the nearest to an allegory of any thing in the Bible;* and, by the way, it is not in the Bible called a *parable*.”

“The power of the parable,” says Trench, “lies in the harmony unconsciously felt by all men, and by deeper minds continually recognized and plainly perceived, between the natural and spiritual worlds, so that analogies from the first are felt to be something more than

* Perhaps it should be admitted that the poetic Song of Solomon comes under this classification, and that even some of the doctrinal truths are taught in this manner, as Paul even more than intimates, in Gal. iv. 24, “Which things are an allegory.”

mere illustrations. They are arguments, and may be alleged as witnesses. The world of nature being throughout a witness for the world of spirit, proceeding from the same hand, growing out of the same root, and being constructed for that very end, all lovers of truth readily acknowledge these mysterious harmonies and the force of argument derived from them. To them, the things on earth are copies of things in heaven. The earthly tabernacle was made after the pattern of things seen in the mount.

‘What if earth
Be but the shadow of heaven and things therein,
Each to other like, more than on earth is thought.’

Milton.

“Earth is the shadow of heaven. The same Lord who sits upon the throne in heaven, does, with the skirts of his train, fill the temple on earth. The earth, nature, man with all his relations to his fellow, with all things here, earth, sea, flood, rain, rocks, hills, mountains, valleys, &c., &c., are but the *hieroglyphics* of God, from which ‘he that is wise and will observe these things,’ may spell out even ‘his eternal power and godhead;’ which means

more than his power, wisdom, and goodness—it includes his justice, holiness, and mercy, as McCosh has shown. All can be learned from these earthly things. They are a copy of the things seen in the mount.”

From this stand-point, we ask you, Reform-writers and religious novelists, to pause and survey the scene that presents itself, and then to say whether we, religious teachers, have not a right to demand a radical and elevating change in you? Again we will admit that you have helped us somewhat already in fanning the intellectual and religious susceptibilities into a brightening glow; but look again with us, and see where the danger now lies. Cheerfully we concede that you have helped us spread the area of religious inculcations; but the stream has grown shallow, almost in proportion to the increased breadth of its surface. You may have brought a few to our altars, but they have not demanded at our hands a holy incense; they have only besought us to *sprinkle rose-water upon them*. They have said our prayers, but they have profaned our God. They demand *taste* and mental stimulation, but they eschew *godliness*. They weep at beauty, but they laugh at sin. If we present to them

Christ on the cross, they will only have him among the doctors. We read to them the decalogue, but this you have almost "made void through your" fictions. Although you may justly claim us as accomplices in the guilt, through our too easy yielding to influences which we ought strictly to have resisted, we will not stop here, but further charge that, if we are weak, you are treacherous. If we should thank you for so many *religious readers*, we will blame you for inaugurating a more loathsome *cant* about "*poor humanity*," than was ever heard from lips Puritanic. If you have brought many to the committee and session room, as candidates for church admission, you have given them water for milk, and neither you nor we can tell what they are spiritually. In your mystical language, we might infer that you regard half mankind as half-born myths, but we try in vain to know that your pupils are *born again*. Nay, we will *thank you*, if you have had any part in opening to us the columns of the newspapers to some kind of religious reading; but we will complain that their editors swear falsely. They go from the communion table smiling, to shame Christianity "with faint praise," and exalt the

“synagogue of Satan,” crying out against our Sabbath School children, because they will not go and see how elegantly Rachel can weep! The fourth commandment is better observed, *per force of dollars*; but a nation of commercial sharpers are cheating the world and one another by the violation of the tenth. If the axes of theology that felled the forest trees of error fifty years ago can now be safely laid aside, the sharp “bush-hook” must clip the undergrowth of sin and licentiousness, or *as we were*, would be the more hopeful condition.

What we demand of you, then, is distinctly this: that you reverse your engine; or else, if we cannot disconnect our cars, our next station is sure to be *perdition*. Our Protestantism is in imminent danger from your dilutions. In our operations in the Sunday School, we are in the midst of a tumultuous agitation of the whole youthful mind committed to us—an agitation of curiosity, of stimulated sensibilities, perhaps we may say, of intellectual aspirations, but not at all of religious affection or desire—caused by your incessant publications of “religious fictions.” And what we have said we repeat, that our hope is in a “calm” sufficiently long to “work out an observation.”

For, as we have said, we want you all; but you must take the Bible for your chart, and not take on board Jean J. Rousseau or Byron, or Sue or Dumas, for a pilot. The fear of being misapprehended must excuse minuteness in the application of these general principles. We ask, then, that, if you do not like God just as you find him in his word and works, you would begin reform in your own heart; that you love God for what he is, and not for what you would wish to make him; that you look at truth till you see in it a beauty which fiction cannot enhance in your own eye; that you always use fiction as subordinate to truth, and not subordinate truth to fiction; that your warp and woof shall be truth, and fiction your dressing, when your conscience and good judgment can so use it; that it always be illustrative, and never put for fact; that you reserve your anathemas for your distant foes, and not deal them out to your nearest friends, who differ from you but a little; that you dispense entirely with profane cavil, and all *elliptical profaneness*, which shows you are in love with it; that you rightly conceive the length and breadth and height of the Christian temple,

before you begin to describe it; that you dispense entirely with all faded ornaments, badges, titles, and castes; that you take the person of the Holy Ghost from the technicalities in which the world has bound him, and co-work with him, as the disciples did on the day of Pentecost, for the conversion of sinners; that you be not ashamed of godliness; that you restore the pillars of doctrinal truth, where you have built up the precarious and decaying tressel-work of self-righteousness and human fancies; that you live upon the diet you commend to others; that you quote Christ and Paul for as good authority as Plato and Aristotle; or, if from modern classics, Baxter and Doddridge, rather than Coleridge and Carlyle; that you insist upon an outspoken life in the Christian, as bold and consistent as that of the Mohammedan or the Romanist; that you be as ready to admit the true God into all the concerns of life, as ever heathen was to attribute visible effect to his false deities; that you insist that all men bow to the authority of the Bible, and urge its claims upon high and low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant; that you accept no substitute for a "Thus saith the Lord;" that you

school your imagination amid probable realities, and not among the extravagant fancies of worldly dreamers; that you vindicate truth and righteousness, and turn the slanderous charges of fanaticism upon their foes; in short, that you enthrone God and dethrone man.

When you shall have opposed some Doric structures to the *baby houses* of Romish fables, licentious fictions, and French infidelity, and put the enemy everywhere on the defensive, it may be time for Corinthian ornament. But, if our convictions are not false, we want, for some time to come, doctrines, facts, and arguments, with fiction illustrative and entirely subordinate. And even "Uncle Tom" must not be presented to us as a perfect character. The Bible has none such.

This is the place which the Great Teacher gave to the use of a fictitious dress in religious teaching; and there, we think, he intended it to remain, until the figurative should fade away in the sublime reality.

But if the religious novelist will consult the Sabbath School teacher, he may learn that Christ adopted this mode of teaching as simply preparatory to a higher; to accommodate himself to the low capacities of his hearers, that the

radiance of his own unshadowed conceptions might not dazzle their eyes, before they were able to bear it; else what mean such passages of Scripture as Mat. xiii. 10-13, 34; Mark, iv. 11, 12, 34; Luke, viii. 10? Do they not teach that, from a present necessity, the truth was veiled in an obscurity, which was soon to be dissipated by the coming of the Holy Ghost, who should "show us all things"? Parabolic teaching is not the final, but the elementary process. When we behold and feel the power of God's higher methods of teaching us, by the thunder-storm, the earthquake, or by the more silent but not less grand and imposing apparatus of nature, we stop our prattle. Is it not already time that the religious teacher should begin rather to dispense with metaphor and figure, and to use a more direct language? It can hardly be doubted that the youngest of scholars in the Sabbath School understand what can be taught by parable. It cannot at all be doubted that they who have learned from the Scriptures what real religion and humanity are, know more of both than could possibly be acquired from a life-long acquaintance with the best of modern poets and novelists. True, our great geniuses talk as though Robert

Burns and Charles Dickens had been the first discoverers of Christianity. Our infant scholars could, if they would, tell such idolatrous deifiers of mere humanities, that it was *Jesus Christ, who told them the story of the "Good Samaritan."* Our lecturers talk to us as though there had been no Bible, no Jesus Christ, no evangelist, until Goethe, Coleridge, Charles Lamb, and Charles Dickens. The Sabbath School teacher, if not filled with indignation, is ready to shed a tear over such willful ignorance, and to ask these men, whether they ever really heard of a book called the *New Testament*. If they shall say, "Yes, and we understand it," they will stand self-convicted of a wanton and dishonest suppression of its claims to be acknowledged as the spring of all charity and good, the fruitful seed-bed of all in modern literature that aims to bless and elevate man. We say, wanton and dishonest; for we will not assume them to be such fools as to be lecturing us on astronomy, and knowingly leaving out of view the whole solar system, and all that pertains to it. Ye writers for Sabbath School teachers and scholars, you must give us different books; for we cannot, must not, follow you after these

literary "Jack o' Lanterns." You are one with us. You want us as much as we want you; but our demand is for another kind of style. If our turbulent, vaulting method of writing out our desires provoke and disgust, and rather hinder than help you, we still hope that your better sense will see and supply what we want, and then will our millennium be nearer. You know and feel that it is SIN that has ruined nations, burned cities, and peopled hell. You know, too, that genius and art will produce painters, dramatists, Italian singers, and French dancing-masters; but it is truth alone, religious truth, that has any antiseptic power. Dilute this, and in exact proportion do you admit the antagonistic elements of national and personal degradation, barbarism and spiritual death. It is not, therefore, more important that oral teachers of Bible truth be tried by its standard, than it is that your books shall be.

Perhaps we ought to dwell a little longer upon this theme, to exhort the purchasers of Sabbath School library books to see to it, when they make out their orders, that they choose, not such books as have the least truth and the most fiction in them; but we must leave this

to be inferred from what we have already said upon this prolific and important subject.

Is a library a most happy and powerful auxiliary to a Sabbath School?

Yes; and were it possible, no book should be placed in the hands of a pupil, but from the personal knowledge of the teacher that it is suited to the intellectual capacity and religious condition of the scholar; nor should a book be placed in the library, except it be taken from among the publications of standard societies, without being examined by a judicious committee of the school.

How shall the difficulty of making a good selection be obviated?

Let the school be furnished with descriptive catalogues of the several publishing societies, by consulting which, the committee can ascertain the general character of the books with little labor, together with their prices, and make their selections to suit their circumstances and means. If these do not furnish a sufficient supply, the deficiency can be made up from the bookstores, but only with great care in the selection.

How shall the committee avoid the selection of books already in their library?

On making the first purchase for the library, a list of the books should be made out, giving the titles in full, arranged alphabetically, and placed on file with the secretary; and when a new purchase is made, every book can easily be compared with this list. On every new purchase, a new list should be made out, comprising the whole library.

May not the whole library be occasionally sent off to poor schools, and its place supplied by a new one?

By no means. We ought not to serve God with that which costs us nothing. New books are as important for *poor* schools as for *rich* ones. Better send new libraries to the destitute, and not put them off with ragged second-hand books. Keep up your library, by retaining every book on your list, and if one is worn out or lost, replace it with a new one. Keep them clean and nicely covered, and they will be new to the younger children, who grow into the school.

Are there few or many modes of keeping the accounts and distributing the library books?

There are many; but as yet, no one has been discovered that is wholly free from objections. And so much depends upon the skill and tact of the librarian, that it will avail nothing to prescribe any plans in detail, beyond the suggestions which will be found in the blank record books of the publishing societies.

CHAPTER XIV.

SELF-DENIAL.

ALTHOUGH individual piety and activity come not legitimately within our prescribed limits, yet, as all organic action depends upon these, no other apology will be offered for referring to them, in this connection. Did we here intend a complete view of this all-important subject, we should be obliged to traverse the whole field of Christian experience. For, while, on the one hand, the skeptic sneeringly inquires, "Why should a heaven-begotten religion be so imperfectly revealed as to leave us in painful doubts?" the ordinary Christian hears, with yet greater surprise, the matured saint assert that life has no sorrows and death no terrors for him. Between these two extremes ranges every possible gradation of belief; but somewhere will be found the line that must divide the enemy from the friend of God. Here we may observe that the great differ-

ence in the life of believers and unbelievers is often not so much in the outward conduct, as in the state of the heart. That state of the affections, which has so much to do with our happiness here, and which may be expressed in a proud, disdainful glance, or a complacent, loving look at the cross, holds in it the germ of eternal happiness or misery. The lines, which may seem to run parallel, have entered upon diverging circles, as drops of water dividing on a mountain top, will flow into opposite currents, and finally reach their destination in arctic and antarctic seas. Had we a guage accurately to measure human happiness, we might find that even here, it would be in exact proportion to holiness. It has been the rich experience of some Christians, in all ages of the world, that "perfect love casteth out fear." That this number may be greatly increased, is not only obvious, but the entire resources of God are pledged to this result. The law of holiness perfectly agrees and conspires with the law of grace, to achieve this end in the heart of every believer. Among the early Christians, errors of belief not more quickly followed the genuine faith, than, in Christian experience, the counterfeit joys deteriorated the work of

grace begun in the soul. Polycarp and others as eagerly thirsted for the glory of martyrdom as for holiness ; but fanaticism no more detracts from attainable happiness or joy, than false witness from the force of truth. The work of sanctification is a growth to be obtained, by the grace of God, under a diligent training and self-discipline. And this course perseveringly pursued will lead to such attainments as enabled the martyrs to count it all joy* that they were esteemed worthy to suffer for Christ. But it is not more certain that sanctification is a work progressing toward perfect happiness, than that it is attainable only by self-mortification ; and he who finds himself unwilling to enter upon the process of self-discipline, may well doubt whether he has any part or lot with those who are counted worthy to suffer for Christ. True, the greatest of our trials are nothing compared with those of the apostolic age, or of any subsequent age of persecution. Indeed, no two ages have ever had, or ever will have the same trials, although the spirit with which they are borne is always the same. It

* Mat. v. 12 ; Acts, v. 41 ; Hebrews, x. 34 ; 1 Peter, iv. 13, 16 ; James, i. 2.

is equally certain that no two individuals are subject to the same discipline as a test of their obedience, and yet all have that best adapted to convince them of their true state of heart, if they are attentive to the monitions of the Heavenly Teacher. The merchant may have to give up his gains; the student, his delight in literature; the politician, his love of fame; the mechanic, his craft; and every one is to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. While each indulges the delusion that he could bear the misfortunes of others, or any other trials than the present, God's wisdom appoints, with unerring skill just those best fitted to touch the besetting sin, and to accomplish the best good of every believer.*

The professor that can satisfy himself with the most frivolous excuses for not entering upon a course of self-denying life, should come to the conclusion at once that he has no genuine Christian experience. He can have no satisfactory proof of his love to Christ, except through such an apprehension of Christ's love to him as shall lead him to a corresponding

* Romans, viii. 28.

love to others; and without this, whoever depends upon him, for any length of time, to engage in self-denying labors for the extension of Christ's kingdom, will lean upon a broken staff.*

So completely, however, have religious freedom and worldly prosperity covered over, if not obscured this prerequisite of wholesome discipline, that we are obliged to descend from the high ground of principle, rather to tamper with symptoms than to prescribe for the real disease. What but the fact that such miserable excuses are sometimes offered could apologize for the recital of such trifling as this: "I cannot go to Sabbath School, because I cannot get my dinner in season!" "I cannot join the Sabbath School, because my wife wishes me to walk to church with her!" "I want to rest on the Sabbath!" "My friends must see me on the Sabbath!" "I spend my Sabbaths in the country!" "The Sabbath is the only day I get for reading!" and thousands of others, yet more trifling.

Yet, what was it that you did, when you took the vows of God upon you? Was it an

* Acts, xix. 19; John, iii. 16.

unmeaning ceremony,—the mere formality of a custom-house oath? Do you fall back upon mental reservations or good intentions? But is the lie not still to the Holy Ghost? Do you take refuge under the customs of society? You professed entire consecration of time, talents, body, and soul, to the extension of Christ's kingdom; and can you think so lightly of it? Every night, if not every hour, your conscience disturbs you with questions like these: Am I living as I ought? Am I doing my utmost to advance Christ's kingdom in my own heart and in the hearts of others? Have I spoken to any one to-day on the subject of personal piety? Where did I strike the last blow on the kingdom of darkness? Have I ever been the means of turning one soul to righteousness? Am I now stifling these questions with the worldling's text, "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel?" Does this persuasion lull the perturbation, until another prayer-meeting or sermon disturbs your repose? Descending again to particulars: You have seen that nine out of ten fail in business, because of over-doing and making haste to be rich. But *you* will venture.

You have seen Christians around you, located here and there, with no reference to a life of usefulness. Consistency does not demand the sacrifice, and you covet only respectability, in religion as in business. You have, indeed, no evidence of present spiritual life; your hopes are but just strong enough to awaken your fears. You know that, to take a step in the discharge of duty, involves self-denial, and that there is no doing any good without it; but you never aspired to pre-eminence in religion. You have come to regard holiness as rather the dream of the enthusiast than a practical attainment for you. As for plans of usefulness, if others have annoyed you with some of theirs, you never disturbed your own head with one—nay, you esteem it quite a merit that your influence is not against the religion you profess; for you have heard of some that dance, drink, or go to the opera and theater; but you have kept consistently aloof from the *churches of Satan*, and have done something to sustain good order, by *patronizing* Christian institutions. Possibly, you have consented to be a director in some board, having in view the spread of the Gospel among men. Little difficulty has been found in getting men to attend

twelve meetings in a year, for some such purpose; and thus their influence is given to the right side of moral questions, and society is thereby well sustained. Yet, it is not self-denial they give, but their *influence*—if, indeed, they belong to the class of Christians we are now addressing.

Doubtless we are speaking to some, whose sad experience it has been to find but little pleasure in religion, because it has been so intermixed and diluted with selfishness and indifference, and who are desirous of finding a better way. Let it be understood that connection with any one or even with all the religious institutions of the day, will never fulfill such an obligation as abides upon every professor to do what he can to win souls to Christ. In our day and age, connection with religious organizations involves no exercise of this principle, unless your interest in them *brings you into conflict with individual minds*. Sinners are to be converted one by one, whether young or old, rich or poor. A revival, and general interest, will greatly facilitate individual effort; but the church generally has yet to be made willing to undertake almost the only self-denying labor in our day and country, which is, the

preaching of the Gospel face to face with our fellow men. Greatly as organizations may facilitate this labor, we must hasten to the conclusion that they will never supersede it. Until we are ready to undertake this, the progress of Christianity will be slow and fitful, gaining here and losing there. Interior personal growth in piety will also strongly resemble, in its moral phases, these outward characteristics.

The Bible and Christian biography so fully illustrate and define the nature and importance of self-denial, that, dwelling upon this theme with the Sabbath School teacher is certainly abusing his patience, if not insulting his understanding. But will not these pages meet the eye of some professing Christians, who live as though modern Christianity involved no such principle? This distinguishing feature, if unnecessary to other systems, is, nevertheless, the very basis of that profession we have made. Restraint of appetite, of passion, pride, lust, and all sinful tendencies, is as necessary now as it ever has been ; and so is the overcoming of the inordinate love of ease. Liberty and civilization have only made these enemies of all righteousness the more dangerous, as they have

become the more subtle foes. Fasting is, indeed, obsolete; but prayer without it has become mockery, and worldly ambition is substituted for desires after holiness. Sinai thunders, "Thou shalt not," but its force is broken by the benumbing influence of custom. The want of the principle of self-denial is more than ever felt. Multitudes will go here and there at the sound of eloquence; but the prayer-meeting, and the poor perishing sinner (over whom the angels hover and weep), are unheeded. Mere eloquence is exalted to the skies, and the earth reverberates with hallelujahs to this and that man; but where is the "joy over one sinner that repenteth"? Novelty may excite you for awhile in this or that new enterprise, but with the first tug of self-denying labor, you faint and retire. "Could ye not watch?" is the rebuke of one hour—"forsook him and fled," is the history of the next. Romance tempts you to missionary life; but a paved street will not facilitate your step into the dark caverns of sin and human wretchedness, though gems were glittering there that require but the polishing of the truth, at your hands, to fit them for a Saviour's crown. Nay, your own kitchen has the darkened, ignorant

mind, to enlighten which requires study, prayer, patience, perseverance, kindness, and love like that which Christ hath borne to you. Do you say you have tried here and failed? How did you fail? Did you ever read a Catholic book, to learn how to preach the Gospel to a Papist? Say, Christian mother, did you ever show your interest in the temporal and spiritual welfare of your Catholic servant, by teaching her for two or three long years, as you have your own child, less ignorant or prejudiced than she? Have you ever prayed with her, and taught her to pray? Have you ever made her feel that she must be born again, or she cannot see the kingdom of God? Have the influences of your watching, your tears, your self-denying perseverance, not only penetrated the crust of prejudice, but assured her of your disinterestedness? But again, do you say, "I have spoken to her, but she would not hear; and besides, the next week she went and told the priest, who forbade her to hear me." Did you still persevere, so that, when she told her next story to the priest, he heard from you, through her, of the force of Christian love? Did he hear from you a gospel preached, the power of which he never felt? Was your servant a

“living epistle,” from which he could learn the very spirit of the Gospel you profess, and like Satan, “Stand abashed, and see how awful goodness is, virtue in all its charms how lovely?” Did you ever send your message to him in such a way as to win him to your faith, or with design to do it, remembering that his spiritual arrogance had intercepted every ray of light that would have penetrated his mind? Until you have done something of this, do not complain of spiritual darkness, or deadness to heavenly joys, nor of lost hopes, nor consult your friends or your pastor about mental and moral diseases, and symptoms of despair. These foes of your spiritual joy can never run fast enough to overtake you, in this discharge of duty; or, they will fly from their ambush at the first sound of your footsteps. Neither friends, pleasant associations in life, captivating society, domestic happiness, nor even prayer-meetings, secret prayer, sermons, and all other means of grace combined, can be substituted here; but rather, all these are but means to qualify for personal and individual labor with souls perishing around you. *Love* is not only your instrument, with which you are to do this work, but a clue to the paradox with which we com-

menced this chapter. Perfected here, this love to man brings with it as a necessary sequence, the love to God, which casteth out fear.

Do you yet doubt, and still fear, that, after all, such a labor may be in vain? Then it is your first self-denying duty to remove that doubt and that fear. You may know when this unbelief is removed, by the strength of your faith and determination, that it will be done.

“But is not the Holy Spirit sovereign?”

“Yes; but his attribute of sovereignty does not interfere with your success, or with the uniformity of his own operations on the souls of men. The latter is, indeed, the ground of your hope; while the former is certainly no hindrance to it.”

“But do you say that results are uniform? and that, in my faithfulness is certainly involved the salvation of this or that individual?”

“Yes, just as certainly here as anywhere else, will effect follow cause. The leaven will not more certainly ferment your bread, your food will not more certainly nourish your body, the seed you plant will not more certainly grow, than your labors with the impenitent, if what they should be, will uniformly result in con-

version. If the leaven is too cold or too hot, the bread will not rise, for no fermentation will take place. If your food is not adapted to the condition of your body, it will not nourish, but may greatly injure you. Again, the soil, the temperature, the moisture, must be adapted to the seed, or it will not germinate. So it is with some well-meant efforts for the salvation of souls. But the conditions complied with, results are sure to follow."

"I have tried it, and have not found it so."

But how did you try it? Did you talk to some one *about* religion? Or, did you only throw a tract in his way, or give him a book to read, or read a sermon to him, or go to some assembly of Christians and *say* prayers for him? Was there any self-denial in all this? What we mean is this, that the means must be adapted to the end, in such a connection as is everywhere necessary, when any other causes are relied upon to produce effects. It is not merely to put religion in any one's way. God has done this without any of your instrumentality. The heavens and earth are vocal with general appeals. No living ministry is wanted for this. God has instituted the living ministry for another work, a

self-denying work, and this is it: To grapple with that mind, and awake it from its death-like slumber; to wrestle with it as a man with his fellow, in most exhausting conflict, ready to forego every pleasure for it, nay, ready to die for it. Yet even all this may be done, and still, if the right affection is not in it, it is nothing.* Your affections must fasten upon that soul, for which Christ died, as the love of Christ himself first fastened upon your own soul, with a determination that it shall not be lost. Let not Satan successfully suggest, at this point, that you may be robbing God of his glory. God's jealousy will never burn towards his creatures in this struggle, but his sympathies are intensely with them; for he allows himself to be assaulted, if we may so speak,† by the importunity of his children, when earnestly seeking what is agreeable to his revealed will. Were the question, then, put in this form, "Can you convert a soul?" the answer must be, *no*. But if it were *yes*, it would be nearer the truth than the common idea that we must stand a certain distance from

* 1 Cor. xiii. 1: "A tinkling cymbal."

† The unjust judge.—Luke, xviii. 1—7.

that soul, in order to secure God's glory in its conversion. Our daily language, in this as in other things, indicates the spirit with which our undertakings are prosecuted. Such perversion of the truth into a mere excuse for negligence and indifference, is seen only in religion. We meet with no rebuke when we say, "I did this thing or that," though God's agency is just as really involved as in the conversion of a sinner. True, this is a new creation; but he has made it depend upon, not the ministry of angels, but of his humble creature, man. We could not believe this, but upon the authority of God himself. Perhaps it has occurred to some one that, notwithstanding effects so certainly follow causes, no present disinterested love for souls, no prayerful utterance of faith,* no dying love of man, can secure immediate results, although we should have grace to comply with every condition on which depends success.† The results may depend upon causes so remote in the history of the individual with whom I may be dealing, that my present faithfulness may have no such effect as

* Mat. vii. 7: Ask and ye shall receive.

† James, v. 16: The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

is claimed for it. Is it not often that the same treatment which will save one, will not affect another; the same sermon which will awaken one, will not engage the attention of another? and on the very theory now advocated, the difference is made to depend, not upon my faithfulness, but possibly upon the prayers and teaching which a godly mother may have uttered in the infant ear of one, but which the other never heard. This is true; and it accounts for the different degrees of resistance or of readiness in different individuals to comply with the terms of offered mercy. But after all, it is no hindrance to your success. Promises to you are independent of all these circumstances. You may not know, you cannot tell, how or when your prayer will strike the chain of God's sequences. Your ground of confidence is this, that God has been powerful, wise, and good enough to establish a government in which he can answer prayer, answer it immediately and independently of all other causes, and in no wise disturb the even tenor of those laws, whose majestic serenity will lead us into unbelief, unless we carefully watch and study the mysterious excellency of God, manifest in both his word and works.

Sabbath School Teacher, once more we turn

to you. Everywhere we see multitudes of youth, who have been taught for years in the Sabbath School, and who yet are not converted. They may have been taught something of the Bible, with a vague reference to their future conversion; but where is the *one* over whom your soul has yearned, with more than a parent's fondness? Where is the *one* into whose ears you have poured the very agony of your soul; over whom you have wept tears that were wrung from you by the apprehension that he would be lost, nay, *is* lost? The pupils of some teachers have been converted almost as fast as they have taken a seat in their classes. We venture nothing in asserting that this was because of their faithfulness, their prayerfulness, their self-denying labor. But has it been so with you? and if not, are you able to say, that you have tested God's promises, and found them to fail? Or are you compelled to say, that you have not "so spoken" that the Lord hath opened the heart to believe? Can you escape the conclusion that, unless our memory is destroyed, there will be in the world to come the recollection of misimproved opportunities resulting certainly in the eternal misery of many whom we might have won to happiness and heaven? And if this shall raise

higher our estimate of the grace that hath rescued us from deserved doom, will it not yet modify our happiness to all eternity? for it is only those who turn many to righteousness that shall shine as stars in the heaven. Every present loss of usefulness is, then, inevitably eternal; to you, to others, and to God.

We may wonder why this vast machinery produces so little result. But here we have the answer: We may multiply it a thousand fold, and unless it is pervaded by this self-denying energy of Christianity, we shall still mourn that the vast array of means is comparatively powerless. At this point, there can be no genuine feeling or action that will not show itself in fruits; and, on the other hand, there can be no dissembling, for "God is not mocked." Not a single step can be taken, on any other principle, that will be a real advance. This individual struggle, this personal sacrifice, this face-to-face endeavor, has in it all the real religion you and I profess. But cannot this labor, after all, be made our highest happiness? Yes; and the joy of God will exceed all other joys, as the light of the sun transcends all lesser lights. Then will our orthodoxy be tested by the real amount of genuine love and labor it produces in the soul of the believer.

CHAPTER XV.

THE HOLY GHOST OUR HELP.

No creature, who is truly rational, can entertain a doubt of the sovereignty of God; and no man, however morally demented, can doubt his own capacity and liberty, both to choose and refuse. Practically, it would be a waste of time and words to show that God is powerful enough, and wise enough, to institute such a government as that under which he has given us being. In the foregoing pages, it has been our endeavor not so much to define duty, as to indicate "a way," and excite to the pursuing of it. Our present object is, not to meet the cavils of a treacherous and deceitful heart, ever conspiring the most unnatural suicide, but to present the rich inventory of the resources which God has placed within the reach of his creatures, that they may secure both their own salvation and that of their fellow men. We hope it has already been seen, too, that,

by his gracious arrangements, He has made our own happiness depend upon our efforts to make others happy, thus duplicating the effect of every benevolent action.*

The sublime Scriptural manifestation of God's existence, is a Trinity. In the absence of any arithmetic by which the finite can bring the infinite into mathematical proportion, or even perfectly within our comprehension, we may, nevertheless, adore God, and admire his goodness the more ardently as shown in revealing his Triune character; for by it just so much more of his goodness is brought within our knowledge. From what he has revealed, we learn that he has unfolded to us just so much of his works and ways, as it is best for us now to know; nor has he hidden any thing from us that we can find out; for it is the “secret things” only that “belong to God.” Every natural and revealed truth challenges our investigation; and we are to stop contented, just where we find an insuperable barrier in the word of God, or in our own constitution. And even then we

* 2 Cor. ix. 6: “He that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully.”

are to tarry only for a short time; "for what we know not now, we shall know hereafter." Shall we pause and gaze awhile, then, at this overflowing of Infinite Benevolence? We must behold it in the three-fold aspect under which God's munificent revelation has portrayed it to us.

As the vibrations of a bell include the entire chords of sound, which are only to be distinctly apprehended by indefinite division; or as the works of God's hand can only be studied accurately through what we call divisions into sciences; so in his revelation of Himself, He has presented us with a substantial unity in a plurality of persons, and a variety of manifestations peculiar to each. And in all these God's nature and character are to be studied that we may gain of them a just conception. If we may be allowed so daring a presumption, may we humbly inquire whether we have not become more familiar with God the Father, as the Author of the glorious plan; yet better acquainted still with the Son, who has executed these great designs; to the comparative neglect of the Holy Spirit, who is as intensely present in every atom, in every law,

and in every conceivable point of space, at every moment of time ; who

“Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.”

If it should be claimed, on the one hand, that the fullness of the Spirit's revelation was not to take place till Christ's ascension,* we reply that this would make but a very few years' difference in the time of their complete manifestation ; for it will not be pretended, if we look through the Old Testament, that the knowledge of Christ is any more rapidly or conspicuously developed than that of the Holy Spirit. We are cheerfully willing to admit that the immediate relation of Christ to us, as the sacrifice for our sins and our Mediator, is such as to bring every sinner into intimate connection with him. But still, we may ask whether much has not been lost, by not giving full heed to the Holy Spirit as the Revelator ? For was he not as really the operating power, under the old dispensation, as he is under the new ? It may be freely admitted

* John, xvi. 7 : “ If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.”

that he being a pure Spirit, could not be rendered so perceptible and tangible to us, as Christ in his material relation. Possibly, too, our vague apprehension of this divine personage may, to some minds, appear authorized by Christ's conversation with Nicodemus, in the third chapter of John. But what is more important than to ascertain the true meaning of our Lord in this passage? Does he mean to say that the laws, which are the uniform method or rule of operation in the action of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man, are so recondite that they cannot be ascertained, and therefore are not a proper or profitable subject of investigation? Or, does he only mean to assert that, like the wind, the causes of his action are so hidden or remote that we do not attempt to account for their present effects, but see and acknowledge their power without being able to ascertain what is the precise mode, in a given instance? We think the latter was his meaning. We do not, we cannot take the first step in any course of moral training, but upon the hypothesis that effects follow causes just as really and uniformly, in the moral world as they do in the natural. Were it otherwise, carelessness and despair would be not only in-

evitable but justifiable.* In the inimitable accuracy of our Saviour's illustration, we shall find the analogy as complete in its extent as it is beautiful in its simplicity. "The wind bloweth where it listeth" (not that *will* is predicable of it, but so it seemeth), "and ye hear the sound thereof," and feel its force, and doubt not the reality of its presence and power. In these phenomena it is not intended that we should understand that the wind does not operate by uniform laws. No one will assert this, although no one may ever have been able to trace those laws. God may or may not have brought the laws of its motion within the compass of human comprehension. It is really of little consequence, practically, for us to know these causes, so long as we know that the laws that control it are uniform, and, so far as we are concerned, reliable. It is no less true of the mind, though perhaps less apparent, that every motion of it has obeyed law perfectly, from the first moment of its existence. We are well assured of this, both from observation and analogy, for we know that it is impossible (without a mira-

* See *Abercrombie on the Philosophy of the Moral Feelings*, p. 103.

cle) that a particle of matter, from the time of its creation, ever disobeyed law. It would be as unwise, as unnecessary, to assume that our Lord meant to teach that in morals God works by uniform laws up to a given point, and then arbitrarily arrests those laws, as it would be to assume that he controls the air to a given extent, and then, by a more personal interference, arbitrarily secures his intended result.

“But, you have said, the Spirit is a Person ; and can the laws which relate to matter perfectly illustrate the movement of the mind ? And, on your theory, do you not preclude personal sympathy, and special grace ?”

Are you shut out from human sympathy and human intercourse by the laws without which you could never enjoy them ? For how could they proceed, if not regulated by laws ? Nay, is not this their glory ? And where do the wisdom and goodness of God so manifestly appear as in his ability to make a government so complete as to be uniform and yet to meet every want of every creature, at every conceivable point, as really, nay, a thousand times more really and perfectly, than if the entire

universe had been created for the use of a single intelligent creature?

“But again, do not our catechisms, and many passages of Scripture,* more than intimate that being born again is not by the will of man, but by the special act of God’s free grace?”

Yes, nor does our theory disturb this doctrine; but, if rightly apprehended, it signally confirms it. Did our limits permit, we might show, from this point, the beautiful harmony of this truth with the doctrine of a general and particular Providence. We could in no way more effectually defeat the designs of God (if we shall not be misunderstood as assuming the possibility of such a thing) than by attempting to run our own imperfect theories through his incomprehensible perfections. So delicately has he blended one manifestation of his wisdom with another, in the natural world, that we cannot perfectly trace his handywork there; how much less in the mysterious world of mind! We cannot tell where vegetable life divides from organic matter, or where the animal life separates from that which is merely vegetable. And yet, what botanist or natural-

* John, i. 13, iii. 5, 6; James, i. 18; 1 Peter, i. 23.

ist would forego the advantages to be derived from classification into *races, species, families, and individuals*? Shall we, then, lose the benefit of studying God in his Providence, because after an arbitrary separation of his acts into *general* and *particular*, we cannot discern every link in a chain that we know is perfectly connected? Much less should we be disposed to lose the infinite advantages to be derived from studying his laws of grace, because we cannot see clearly where and how the divine touches the human mind? Yet more: shall we not hold it in the highest degree reprehensible to abandon revelation and do violence to our own settled, deep, and irresistible convictions, in order to provide for a Sovereignty of God, upon which very Sovereignty we are trying to build a *meritorious apathy*, that offends alike all law, justifies fatalism, dulls the edge of perception, breaks the chain of obligation, and abandons the efforts and prayers of the Christian to inextricable chaos. "Prove me," is the exclamation of Heaven; and let not the answer be, "We cannot."

The sin of faithlessness and indifference, that finds its refuge in this enormous fallacy, is exceeded only by the antithetical blasphemy

which maintains the entire ability of man, separated from all the providential and spiritual aids of God, to do what God alone has pronounced to be his greatest work, viz.: to recreate the heart. God is universally and intensely present to control every event. That these events take place according to principles fixed and unchangeable, only increases our admiration of his wisdom, power, and glory. It is equally apparent (so perfect is his government), that every event in the universe transpires as though every previous act of his providence had conspired to effect it. Descending from this position, then, and availing ourselves of its advantages, we may press our way into a communion of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that shall know no limitation but that of the capacity of the soul to receive, and no limit of co-operation, but that of the ability of the body and mind to perform.

Yet once more: "If this is the proper view to take of God's special acts of Providence and grace, why are not all converted by them?" To this, we can only reply, Not because God has not made a provision adequate for every case, and followed it by a presence that should at once lead every one to submit to the terms

of salvation. This, like the permission of sin, is a question lying beyond our comprehension, if not beyond the disclosures of revelation. But while we may not sufficiently comprehend to answer intelligently, we may not doubt that it is for the good of the universe, and for his own glory. It is clear that the attribute of God's sovereignty neither relieves us from an iota of obligation to secure the salvation of our fellow men; nor, on the other hand, forbids the certainty with which we may rely upon the aid of the Holy Spirit.

Returning from this digression, let us for a moment contemplate our resources in the person of the Holy Spirit, as we find Him revealed in the realms of life present, and of Life eternal.

At the first conception of his presence, as the Author of the renewal of life, what glories rush and overwhelm the imagination! Was He the immediate source of happiness to every sentient being? Was it He who lodged the sapient instinct in every living creature? Was it He who guided the wing of every insect, and flashed the light of the sun upon every created eye? Was it He that moved the succulent currents through the arteries of organ-

ized matter, and painted every leaf and flower? Was it He who breathed the breath of life into the last and noblest work of God? Was it a spark of his own force that kindled the first emotion of love in the creature man? Yes; 'twas he! 'twas he! 'twas he! But our present relation to him, in the design more immediately before us, is to be perceived by contemplating him as our Sanctifier; and it is in this sense chiefly, that the great Apostle meant to present Him to us, in the words quoted, "the more glorious ministrations."* He presents to us, in this relation, especially his attributes of *Wisdom* and *Sovereignty*. His Sovereignty involves the right to convert us just when and where he pleases. It, therefore, must involve the right to make our conversion depend upon means, and upon our use of those means. The sinner may place himself within the influence of means, by which the Spirit works, or beyond their reach. He has the right, as he has the unquestionable power, to follow him beyond means; but he has chosen to exercise the right of working by means. The sinner, therefore, may place himself where his

* 2 Corinthians, iii. 8.

conversion will be (we do not say *must* be) induced ; or he may pass beyond the bounds of means, and make his final damnation certain. This principle admits of *degrees* of assurance. He may place himself where there are ninety-nine probabilities of his conversion, to one of his being lost, or *vice versa*. Sovereignty as obviously carries with it the right to choose one's way, make one's rules, and adhere to them ; and so the Holy Spirit does, and uniformly operates through them.

He is infinitely wise. He has therefore adapted all his means to the desired end. He addresses his creatures with reference to their entire character. Being free, He treats them as free ; being moved by motives and considerations, these He addresses to them. He always selects the time and place best fitted to his operations : The season of youth, as the most hopeful ; the church, the prayer meeting, the Sabbath School, and the closet, as favoring his appeals. He makes the silence of the night speak to us, and the glory of the noon. To the morning and the evening, he gives peculiar voices, if we will hear them. To the sun, the moon, the stars, with herb, tree, plant, and flower, he gives a distinct utterance,—an ap-

peal, which we may not innocently resist. But, the thunders of his voice are from Sinai and Calvary. The last expedient and experiment of Heaven to save, is wisely made in the Bible. He plies every truth there, always selecting that best fitted to the individual case.

Christ's personal work was, indeed, "finished" on the cross; but the wisdom of the Holy Spirit declares it as really at every suitable point of time, as though the scene were transpiring before our eyes at every moment. The ministration of the Spirit wisely answers doubts, inspires right desires, and would remove every obstacle to conversion and sanctification. The whole action of the atonement was to enable Him to do this efficiently. His wisdom precludes the possibility of inadaptation, and guarantees against all mistakes. Man has but little wisdom; but such is the infinite fullness of the Spirit's wisdom, that it supplies all his lack. The devil has much wisdom. He knows that youth is the most favorable season for repentance. Look at the adaptation of his snares. If he can make one his victim beyond this period, it is more than three-fourths certain that he will have him forever. If he can keep him away from Chris-

tians, and in the company of the profane, irreligious, and vulgar, can make him laugh at sin and mock at holiness, get him to the card-table or the gin-palace, he is almost sure of him. If possible, he multiplies cares, prevents reflection, tempts from the closet, makes prosperity an incitement to fresh worldliness, and perverts even afflictions and judgments, because he knows the Spirit is watching the best opportunities to press the claims of the Gospel and secure the man's salvation. He therefore follows him to the church, to the Sabbath School, and even to the inquiry meeting, with his impertinent and insulting suggestions. But the Holy Spirit is wiser than he and defeats all these purposes, when the sinner will yield to him; nay, he makes them the means of uniting the soul more firmly to himself.

Notwithstanding the light that seems to radiate from every object in creation, and the steady stream from heaven that has broken through the sin-created darkness around us, the "prophecy is in part," and we see but "in part." We may be likened unto a vessel be-fogged at sea. These lights from nature are to our imperfect vision but as bubbles playing transiently above the dark, deep tide. Above

us, through the apocalyptic rift, we dimly discern figures and forms, and sometimes think we hear the chiming of bells and voices singing. We ask of each other and of God a thousand questions, but get no answer. In this thick gloom, the Spirit comes to us, and we turn our questioning to him, for he is a Person and our *Friend*, surely he will tell us all. How came we here? may be our first question. The indirect answer reproves our curiosity, and assures us that we are surrounded with danger. Strange voices and stranger sights conspire to make the scene bewildering. Hosts are whirling in inextricable mazes. Air and ocean covered and filled with conflict; men, angels, and devils in dreadful combat. Will you explain all this? "What you know not now, you shall know hereafter," is the quick and only response to these and ten thousand questions like them. True to our best interest, all questions that do not require immediate solution are deferred for a more opportune study in the world to come. If we consider for a moment the issues of the present hour, we shall be as ready to adore the goodness and the personal friendship of the Spirit, in withholding answers to these questions, as we shall be

to praise him for the minuteness with which he has supplied every means for our salvation and immediate escape from the wrath to come.

The Spirit finds us willing captives to sin and Satan. Conscious emotion was no sooner felt, than His gentle breath, falling on the feeblest susceptibilities of the infant, awakened there a loveliness which sin has greatly deformed, but never entirely effaced. Although at every step of life, He may have wooed the object of his affections less and less successfully, He has been faithful to press his claims more powerfully. No eye but his has seen our danger. No ear but his could listen to one of ten thousand of our complaints, and no parent's heart has ever yearned with a compassion like his. Foolishly have we lavished our affections on our worst enemies and his. Yet, memory recalls no scene but is endeared with his love; all our pathway in life is, as it were, wet with tears that he has shed over our ingratitude. Does the future loom before us an impenetrable darkness, that fills us with doubts and fears? Did we realize it, He is ever present in that future, to offer us just the help, the strength, the wisdom, and all the happiness we can

receive. While we grope in superstitious madness to find some fairy hand that shall be open to supply our every want, the cravings of the immortal for something more, some angel that shall bear us to enchanting realms, He is in us, by us, and around us, to give us more than fancy ever can conceive. Prisons, floods, and flames have never been able to separate him one moment from the soul that trusts him and repays love for love. God's infinitude is the resource of every soul that will put itself under the convoy of this personal Friend, now seeking entrance to every human heart. No tears of sorrow but he offers to transmute into tears of joy; no fears of future ill but he is ready to dissipate, by the clear and glad assurance of hope; no desire which he does not immediately point to the exhaustless resources of heaven. Who will not accept such proffered Friendship, and be forever completely blessed?

But, while the Holy Spirit appears to us thus through the past, the present, and the future, by every natural object, as well as every personal attribute of his infinite Being, let us linger yet a little to contemplate him in that peculiar aspect in which he is presented

to the laborious Christian. As no one can feel the need of divine aid so much as he who toils to enforce God's claims upon the depraved heart, so no one can feel the value of the peculiar relation of the Spirit as *Comforter*, so much as the teachers of religion.

Anticipating his own sufferings, in the garden of Gethsemane, our blessed Saviour there wet the earth with tears of blood. With those of his disciples then as immediately in his view, he uttered the closing chapters of the Gospel by John, every word of which glows with an intensity of affection that can find no other relief, but in presenting this characteristic of the Holy Spirit. He assured them that in him their joy should be full, and so it was.

Not more conspicuous was the epoch of Christ's exaltation, as our atoning priest, than the reinauguration of the Holy Spirit, henceforth to be the medium of all Heaven's intercourse with earth. True, he had been so before; but now was the manifestation so complete, that the child might become the teacher. For the love you bear the world, like your Master, you are to bear scorn and reproach. For your efforts to redeem it, you are to meet persecution, it may be unto death.

While you are stemming the flood of sin, every wave of which is to blast and desolate the unhappy victim, you are to expect nothing but the sinner's ingratitude in return. Yea, from those who profess the same attachment to Christ's kingdom that you do, you are to receive some of your severest wounds. The trumpet of fame and human glory will announce the approach of an earthly monarch; who may come forth to your execution, when the throne on which he sits would not remain stable a single day, but for the spiritual defenses and supports your self-denying labor has given it. But for all this and indescribably more, you are to receive an abundant reward, in the conscious presence of the Comforter. In the fatigue with which you return from the scene of conflict, there is an ecstasy of joy you would not exchange for any earthly praise or diadem. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me," is more to you than that every angel in heaven should shout your triumph. The simplest word you have ever uttered for Christ and his cause, has identified you with all that is good and glorious in God's universe, and this transmutes the prison walls to stones of

sapphire, the flames that consume you to an *aureola* of glory. This is your present reward. Are you ready to exclaim, in the ecstasy of your soul, "It is too much! let me hide away from the brightness of such glories?" It may be too much for you. But it is not enough to satisfy the fullness of your Father's love. Before you feel the chill of death, you must take anticipated possession of your mansion in heaven. The Spirit conducts you thither, and shows, in uncreated light, your final abode, and bids you taste the sweetness of that fellowship, which shall be not only with all those justified and made perfect, but with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost for ever and ever.

CHAPTER XVI.

FRAGMENTS SUPPLEMENTARY.

ALTHOUGH the Bible has prescribed no one form of announcing its truths, as preferable to another, has not experiment, use, and success decided a delivery from the pulpit to be among the best methods of declaring it? Yes; but every teacher and every Christian should study to deliver it in some form.

Should the Sabbath School teacher seek to elevate his standard of teaching to that of the pulpit? Yes; but the power of personal religious conversation is the present great desideratum of the Church Universal.

But do not the directions given by Paul to Timothy and Titus, as to the character of bishops and deacons, indicate that some are not under obligation to cultivate the virtues required? No; for such an inference would give others the liberty of drunkenness, polygamy, and other crimes.

Has selfishness corrupted the *offices*, as well as the *meaning of the words* which represent them? Yes; so that each word and office must be carefully separated from its historical connections, before we can perceive its original simplicity and design.

Are the labors and duties of pastors ordinarily such that they ought not to be expected to take any part in the teaching or the details of a Sabbath School? Yes; but where the Holy Spirit abides, such is the magical power of union and identity of interest, that no pastor will fail of a full and efficient school, who, on his way to the pulpit, will regularly pass through the school, although he should never speak, and but seldom smile.

Is it ever justifiable to permit those not professedly pious to teach from the Bible? Yes; for it is in abundant proof that this paradox is less fatal to the kingdom of Christ than the kingdom of Satan, and anon each will claim his own. "Let *him that heareth*, say, Come!"

Does the immigration into New England, as well as the emigration out of it, demand a return to two sessions of the Sabbath School? Yes; for the *teacher* thence would become the

successful advocate of two sessions, and the population which is now taking their place equally demand the benefit of two.

If we are under the special teaching of the Holy Ghost, should every family have some short season, when each member of it shall retire to commune with Him? Yes; but silent prayer, often so effective and prevalent in private, and in public meetings, should never be so long as to admit of wandering thoughts or indistinct musings.

Does increase and decrease of excitement, in revivals of religion, wisely follow cause and effect, here as elsewhere? Yes; and he who wishes a perpetual drought, consistently objects to dews, and showers, and rains. Probably there was no rain in Paradise, and there may be no revivals in the millennium.*

If the wealth of parents is often a misfortune to their children, can it be claimed that church schools may be neglected? No; but while the same exercises are adapted to each, the distinction of a poor or ragged school is a crime to him who makes it.

* Gen. ii. 5.

How much longer will Protestants build churches for Romanists? Until true zeal for souls shall go before false zeal for brick and mortar, which are not divinely appointed means of grace, but means only of comfort. When men are made Christians, they will never lack a place in which to worship God.

Which is the better type of Christianity, the austere asceticism of the monk's cell, or the noisy activity that does some good, but indicates no interior life? The latter makes the better member of society; but they both alike share our pity, deserve our censure, and fail of our charity.

Can there be, for any length of time, a good school without a Teachers' Meeting? I never saw a good school without a good Teachers' Meeting, nor a poor school with a good Teacher's Meeting.

Although skill and hard work are the only conditions of external success in making a good Sabbath School, can there be *real* success where it is not the teacher's aim to honor the Holy Ghost, by speaking *his* truth, with *his* affection, with *his* plainness, with *his* earnestness, with *his* sympathy, and being as ready to-

receive these gifts as he is to bestow them? No; and it is worth the most scrutinizing inquiry whether real success is not in exact proportion to the real, rather than the expressed desire for the exaltation of God, in our efforts to rescue sinners.

Why is the tendency in the Church always as strong toward centralism and prelatical aggrandizement, as in the State to monarchy and despotism? Because there remains a selfish love of power in every heart not entirely sanctified, and the only way to avoid fatal consequences is, to check the first symptoms in the primary assembly.

Next to a good Superintendent, may a good singer be the most useful co-laborer in a Sabbath School? Yes; for here, as in all religious meetings, the singing should commence as soon as three or four persons are present, waiting for the hour of opening to arrive; and often many will come ten or fifteen minutes before the time, to enjoy this voluntary and profitable exercise.

When there is no evidence of piety in life, is it unkind to assume damnation at death? No; Christ did it; and ministers, at funerals,

by asserting no hope for the dead, may warn the living; nay, the tenderest parent, by the loss of the deceased brother or sister, may warn and save his living offspring. The cruel course is the contrary, and just what the dead would not that we should do.

“*What harm is there in it?*” Should such a question ever fall from the lips of a Christian? *No, No!* His only inquiry should be, “is this the best thing an expectant of heaven can now do for the glory of God?”

Is it right to reward children in Sabbath Schools? Yes, but inexpedient, except by the teachers, whose rewards and alms should be so judiciously bestowed as to avoid all unhappy consequences, such as pride, selfish ostentation, display, and a feeling that an obligation is conferred upon the school by the pupil's attendance.

Can the active spirituality of a church be as well judged of by the structure of the Sabbath School room, as by the appearance of the school? No; for building committees sometimes consult the *beauty*, not the *usefulness* of the edifice.

Should God's plan of the family be disturbed

by the erection of asylums or schools of any kind for the assembling of the poor? No; for the interest on the cost of the buildings would board them in the country, secure for them good habits, good air, the benefits of the public school, and the parish church, and prevent contamination. Sunday School Unions, in some cases, might support an agent to find them places.

Is it well for Sabbath Schools properly to observe Thanksgiving, even if Christmas is not noticed? Yes; for although "we know Christ no more after the flesh," yet the State is the creature of the people, and should be heard, especially when it speaks wisely.

Is visiting for personal conversation, &c., in families, the *life-blood* of the Sabbath School system? Yes; but the veins are as important as the arteries. Domestic inconvenience will often prevent an interview, in which case it may be secured at the house of the teacher.

May scientific and useful lectures be delivered before Sabbath School mass meetings during the week? Yes, with great benefit; for they will increase the attendance, attach the scholars to the school, and promote education, which is the natural offspring of religion.

Are Mormonism, deified humanitarianism, spiritualism, transcendental pantheism, &c., new forms of infidelity? Yes; and they only appear at this time, because a little more healthful activity among Christians has forced them obnoxiously to the surface of society, so that we can see in reflected light the depravity that yet remains.

Can judicious charity and religion be dissevered? No; for alms but strengthen vice, except when they contribute to the exercise of the graces of the giver and the faculties of the receiver.

Should new converts be encouraged to speak freely of their personal experiences? Yes; for often a want of encouragement, and a conservative look shut the mouth that is rarely opened afterwards.

Have the arrogant pretensions and burdensome impositions of priestly offices been in proportion to the corruption of the words which designated them? Yes; for *Episcopos*, overseer, or bishop, in the apostolic time and sense, only signified a superintendent of an assembly perhaps often not larger than a Sabbath School or a teacher's meeting, and convened without intimation of authority, except

to put in order where no order or organization existed.*

Is a want of time or an accidental call a good excuse for neglecting any Sabbath School duty? No; for the loss here is two-fold, to teacher and scholar, and the company may generally be profited by going with you; or at least be taught punctuality and adherence to Christian duty by your example.

Are the reading of God's word and prayer means of grace, which, in importance and order of time, should precede hearing, preaching, or teaching? Yes; for these seldom fail of bringing the sinner to reconciliation.

Is the Sabbath School the theological seminary for all men? Yes; but any seminary of education that merely teaches the method of convincing others, of instructing without putting the instructed into the daily doing of duty, fails of reaching the great element of power. Should there not be somewhere a Professorship of Common Sense?

If the world were to wait for church organ-

* Titus, i. 5: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou mightest set in order," &c.

izations with one minister to 500 members, how long before the world could be supplied with ministers, and what would be the expense? What the number of seminaries? What the number of students? What the number of churches and congregations, and expense of supporting the pastors, at \$250 per annum each? It would require 2,000,000 churches and pastors; expense of supporting pastors \$500,000,000 annually.

Are cities necessarily corrupt fountains, deluging the country with streams of vice? No; there are facilities for Christian operations here which do not exist in the country; but vice, finding both cover and shield here, flows *from* the country as well as *to* it; hence the moral purity of cities is of two-fold importance.

Should the heathen be expected to understand the claimed distinctions among the Protestant clergy? No; accustomed to look upon professed priests, explaining our views and trying to bring them to our distinctions is but converting them to abstract speculation, which results in careless indifference.

If teachers prove incompetent, and offer as an excuse for indifference and delinquency that

it is a *voluntary* service, should they be dismissed? No; for although no uninspired instrument could bind them with bonds, penalties, and prisons, as they are now bound, it will take generations yet to bring into the school all good teachers. A good teacher is the joint product of a good superintendent, patience, time, and the Holy Ghost.

If punctuality is the life of a school, what is its aliment? Visiting.

What is the most critical moment in the life of a Sabbath School scholar? That in which he is for the first time introduced to his teacher.

All *art* in religion is like paint on a rose-leaf.

Fitness for death implies two things: Holiness, and a finished work. Who is ready?

“The school of Christianity has a nursery for the young, a hospital for the sick, but no exemptions from duty.”

The churches, as now constituted in our great cities, are pre-eminently adapted to be the great Normal Sabbath Schools, to prepare teachers for local organizations in every neighborhood.

Liberty is the basis and element of all true

obedience, whether in heaven or on earth. In God's perfect government, he has assumed all the risk incident to it, even though it involved the fall of both angels and men.

One Pope can successfully make war with all the prelates of Christendom ; but he cannot silence a single Christian, for his very blood will preach the louder still. Pius IX. understood this, when he said, "I fear not all the combined power of the Protestant clergy. I fear only that colporteur, talking over his Bible."

Paid agents, of all kinds, may be successfully silenced. It was the blood of *Christians*, not of official persons, that placed religion on the throne of Constantine. It will be Christians alone who will take it from seats of authority and give it to the whole world.

Order is to the Sabbath School what the regular motion of the heart is to the body—it will only live a brief and dying life without it.

The nominal relation, or the name on the roll-book, without the actual body and soul in the work, is one of the greatest obstacles in the way of thoroughly cultivating the whole field.

Educational machinery misdirected is liable

to become a great hindrance to Christianity. Take care of religion and she will always take care of learning and liberty, which are but her children. If you try to make the child the parent, it will in the end only demonstrate your folly and defeat your object. Better than adopt the private or the parish school to the breaking up of the public school system, or than reject from the latter the Bible; admit all teachers, of any sect of religion, to a daily recital in the public school, each for half an hour, and trust to the subsequent dispensing of truth in the local churches to perfect a religious character.

Men buy their own ease by giving their money to organizations; better take their money and their Christian principles in their hands, and apply what they have to the direct preaching of the word from their own lips.

The fooleries and idolatries of the Romish service could not be sustained without the organ; nor can the spiritual forces of Protestantism be sustained with it, except as the merest help to the human voice. *Query*:—Should musical instruments be introduced into the Sabbath School? The old Germans were half right when, in the great Reformation,

they were found demolishing the organs, and giving as a reason, that they could not tell whether they had been telling the truth or a lie.

If *pious* zeal were equal to *partisan* zeal, the sticklers for extreme orthodoxy would be few ; but we must confess to a desire for a partisan zeal rather than none at all ; for by that the Gospel is preached, though it be “ through contention.”

If the effort put forth by many men in soliciting funds to build churches were wisely directed to the conversion of sinners, the new converts, the old ones, and the world besides, would not lack a place to worship God, nor God so greatly lack worshipers.

Taste, that warps religion and violates conscience, is a monomania most dangerous to the Christian.

“ Circumstances make the man ; ” but it is equally true that a man of fixed principle and resolute will makes his own circumstances.

The mind is an elastic storehouse, ever increasing its capacity by receipt and delivery, susceptible of indefinite extension. The more you put in it the more it will hold.

Our greatest discouragements arise from

broken resolutions ; but the secret of living usefully and well, is to mend one a minute.

Literally, a hypocrite is a man with two faces. The busy worldling may be as hypocritical as the canting enthusiast. Which, then, produces the worst deformity—the world or the cloister ?

The secret of holy living is, to “do every thing as unto the Lord and not unto men.” In this way, the busiest men may be the most devout.

The secret of being happy is to make others so ; and half the diseases of the body are better cured by medicine for the mind.

When wit and conscience meet in the brain, forbid the tongue to interfere.

Labor for *humanity* is too indefinite to be efficient. If we take care of this individual and this generation, they will take care of the next.

The endowment of religious institutions is liable to enervate, like the endowment of families.

Sources of water are on the tops of the mountains. If the head-springs are dry, there can be no rivers. So with the church's progression ;

it depends upon the individual and Sabbath School laborer for its increase.

Protestants *wish for*, but do not *will*, as does Rome, the religious education of their children; hence the secret of their weakness and her power. She is scientific where we are theoretic, earnest where we are careless, really alive where we are galvanized. A *willing* ONE is stronger than a *wishing* thousand.

Women are the natural and proper teachers of children; and not until the stronger sex reach the diverging point of actual life, do they require men teachers. But in religion, all are teachers or learners.

A good Sabbath School is the joint product of intelligent conviction, sanctified ambition, and persevering effort. Gifted genius might be added, but that modesty in religion has transformed a cardinal virtue into a positive vice, so that all disown the one to avoid labor in the other.

Truths, natural and revealed, like atoms and planets, have appropriate positions; out of place, they may do injury.

If Jesus Christ be not God, then did he lay down his life for a pretension.

The shining sun, without rain or dew, will

produce a killing drought. The presentation of truth, devoid of sympathy and prayer which shall insure the vitalizing presence of the Holy Ghost, will be but a savor of death unto death.

Laws, systems, or theories, are evidences of our weakness. God comprehends without them, although all his works involve them.

Are you ambitious to assume the most interesting, hopeful, and responsible duty in the Sabbath School, take your seat before the youngest class.

It is easier to get a hundred scholars into a Sabbath School than to keep fifty there.

No scholar leaves a faithful teacher without bearing the marks of the Christian engraven upon his countenance; but who can select from the masses such only as have been in Sabbath School?

That Superintendent is not doing his duty to all his teachers, if there is one who cannot interest his scholars without reading to them a library book; or who gets through his recitation, and sits waiting for the school to be dismissed.

Christians, like the Roman soldiers, should practice the field service in the face of the

enemy, and prefer it to the ease and luxury of the camp and fortress.

The church is incidental to an end, and should be regarded only as the recruiting station for the service, or a hospital for the sick, and not as a rendezvous for repose.

Noise in a Sabbath School is a contagious disease, and a specific should always be ready for the first symptom.

Aggressive forms of Christianity, particularly the Mission Sabbath School, should never wait to ask leave, either for existence or for means of support; for God has made individual obligation the power to be touched, and too slow will be the action, and too meager the means that will be drawn by entreaty out of organizations or treasuries.

Perhaps when the millennium shall dawn, organizations may be generally laid aside as useless scaffoldings.

All sermons in Mission Schools should be unwritten, and all such as do not take the audience along with them, should stop at the first period. That one is seldom too long to which all listen.

Napoleon Bonaparte, being asked to address a school, said, "Boys, every moment misspent

here is a chance for future misfortune." Applied to a Sabbath School, it would read, "Every moment misspent here is a chance for future misery."

Vice cannot conquer conscience, without the aid of an imaginary heaven or the theory of annihilation.

Advice, to be considered, must not be dictatorial; and the art of teaching is, to place your thought invisibly within the reach of the learner, that results be not lost by disputing the claims of invention.

When the Christian's service or the sinner's heart is demanded, in return for a Saviour's love, who is insulted by the substitute of money?

Hyper-sentimentalism is often mistaken for religious emotion, and weeping at the sight of a landscape, of Niagara, or of a thunder-storm, is easily substituted for the tears of godly penitence.

Genius may be admired but not adored; its worshiper may apotheosize it, but God abhors the idolatry.

Keep your heaviest armor on in prosperity; for though God guards against both worldli-

ness and despair, there is a vast preponderance of blessings.

Religion in action is the enemy's target, which formalists and scoffers misname bigotry and fanaticism.

Intelligence and faith, are impenetrable shields only to be laid by in sleep and death.

The Sabbath School is the molding room, the world the machine shop; the latter may be noisy, the former must be still.

Conservatism may be suspected of treasonable designs, whenever discovered opposing active godliness.

The Bible contains the only antiseptic principles in the universe.

If envy or malice cannot attack your *work*, they will your *way*.

A bold heart and a philosophizing head, are arsenals for the most deadly ordnance.

Christ's sermon on the mount is the best system of ethics.

Should Sabbath School Teachers, when they bargain their time for the service of others, reserve so much of it as is necessary to meet their engagements, in visiting and attending

the Teachers' Meeting? Yes; and let them be grateful that such is the character of the Master they serve, that both religious and irreligious employers will cheerfully grant it.

Is the hope of the world in battle fields, compacts, conclaves, constitutions? or is it in personal conversation? Unquestionably the latter. Genuine Christianity, like the coral reefs, is the atomic accumulation of individual contributions.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL IS A BUILDING,* and may anywhere be erected. It should have a living and stately growth.† The Superintendent should be the skillful architect,‡ the teachers the workmen,§ the Holy Spirit the abiding tenant.¶ It is always legally entitled to exercise all authority,** and should enjoy all privileges and ordinances; though not always best, it may be often expedient to use them.††

The institutions of the Gospel operate atmospherically, like essences,‡‡ not orbicul-

* 1 Corinthians, iii. 9.

† Ephesians, ii. 21.

‡ 1 Corinthians, iii. 10.

§ 2 Timothy, ii. 15.

¶ 1 Corinthians, iii. 16.

** The only limitation, "decently and in order."—1 Cor. xiv. 40.

†† 1 Corinthians, vi. 12.

‡‡ Matthew, xiii. 33.

arly,* like planets.† *Love*‡ is universally applicable ; *authority*, to a single condition.§

Should the Lord's Prayer often be repeated, as an act of worship, in the Sabbath School ? No ; for by a law of the mind, set phrases once familiarized, will even rob the Holy Spirit of his personality and power. Christ gave this as the substance of all prayer, not for verbal repetition.

Apostolic Christianity took the course of civilization. If gold could induce hundreds of thousands of vigorous young men to emigrate from the United States to California, and from England to Australia, might not the love of Christ lead twenty thousand Sabbath School Teachers to emigrate from the United States to South America, and double the number from England to the Continent of Europe, to rescue these countries from the dominion of Popery and sin ? Here is work for the Young Men's Christian Associations.

No one can possess too much religion. Fanaticism and Enthusiasm are purely terms of *quality* not of *quantity*. ADIEU.

* 2 Corinthians, iii. 17.

† Romans, xiii. 10.

‡ Hebrews, x. 25.

§ Mat. xviii. 15-20 ; Tit. ii. 15.

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 to teach arithmetic and double the number
 from England to the continent of Europe, to
 the continent of Europe from the dominion of
 Europe. It is now a part of the Young
 Men's Christian Association.

No one can be a true religion. For
 religion and patriotism are purely terms of
 quality not of quantity.



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